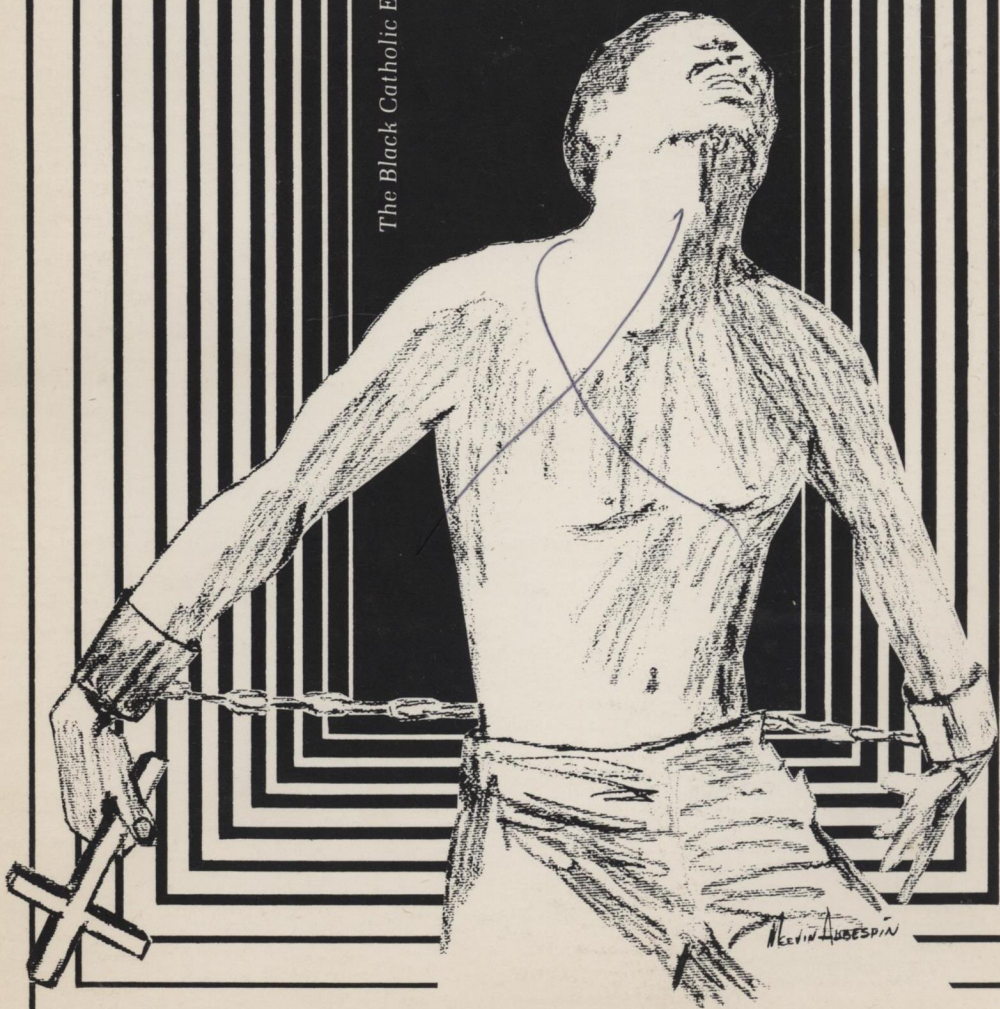


The Black Catholic Experience—A History

The Silent Believers

by Nathaniel E. Green



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Background information on the religious experience of the American Black Catholic, with emphasis on the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky.

Dedicated to a better future for all

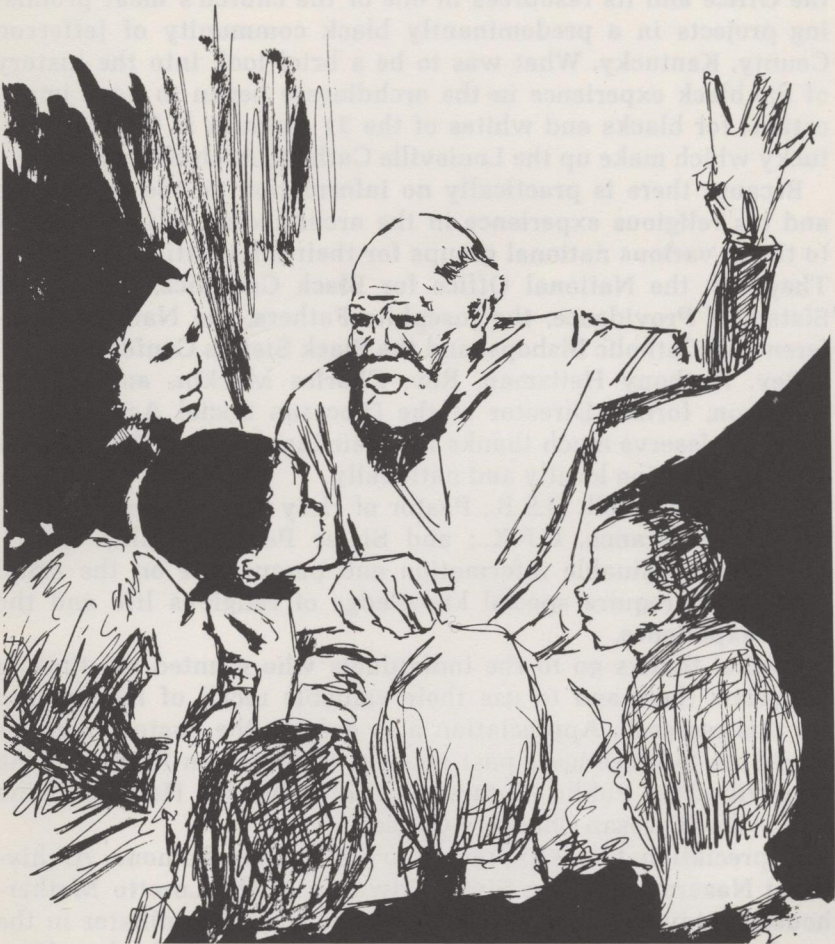
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ILLUSTRATIONS



All illustrations were done by Mr. Mervin Aubespín. Mr. Aubespín is Chairman of the W.E.C.C. and is a professional artist. He is employed by the Courier Journal and Louisville Times Newspaper as a staff artist.



An impression of Uncle Harry who "... did everything in his power to console and instruct ..." by artist Mervin Aubespín. (See Chapter II, page 30.)

PREFACE

The idea of looking at the past before trying to understand the future direction of the Catholic Church in regard to the black man in the Louisville Archdiocese grew out of an effort by the Archdiocesan Confraternity of Christian Doctrine to bring to the West End Catholic Council of Louisville, information that would be of assistance in its efforts to do a job in that changing community.

As a new CCD staff member, I was given the task of involving the Office and its resources in one of the church's most promising projects in a predominantly black community of Jefferson County, Kentucky. What was to be a brief look into the history of the black experience in the archdiocese began to have implications for blacks and whites of the 31 counties in Central Kentucky which make up the Louisville Catholic Archdiocese.

Because there is practically no information on the black man and his religious experience in the archdiocese, it is necessary to thank various national groups for their information and input. They are: the National Office for Black Catholics, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, the Josephite Fathers, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Black Sisters Conference.

Rev. Anthony Heitzman, Rev. Charles Mackin, and Eugene Robinson, former Director of the Diocesan Social Action Commission, deserve much thanks for their insights into the need for such information locally and nationally.

The Rev. Joe Bell, O.S.B., Pastor of Holy Cross Church; Brother Edward Branch, C.F.X.; and Sister Patricia Haley, S.C.N. contributed valuable information and perspective on the small points that require special knowledge of religious life and the black experience.

Special thanks go to the individuals who granted me time to interview them and to use their valuable recall of information for this research. Appreciation also goes to the pastors who allowed me to investigate past records, the Western Branch of the Louisville Free Public Library, and to Father Joe Hayden of the Louisville Diocesan Chancery Office.

Appreciation, too, is expressed to Sister Mary Ramona, Archivist at Nazareth College; Sister Edwarda at the Loretto Motherhouse Archives; Sister Elizabeth Glynn, CCD Coordinator in the rural area; and the total CCD Office staff. It was indeed a pleasure to work with Mrs. Marian Vasser, Ms. Jacqueline Malone, Mrs. Loretta Grumblatt and Ms. Barbara Langley, who helped in coordinating this project.

To Rev. Frank J. Eimer, Director of the CCD Office, special appreciation should be shown for his understanding of the need and place for such information in religious education.

And thanks to all the other people who assisted me in completing this project.

Nathaniel E. Green

September, 1971

INTRODUCTION

The Louisville archdiocese, which at one time took in several states, is steeped in Catholic history. The Bardstown Diocese, as it was known then, claims many "firsts" during the rise of Catholicism in the United States. However, as one investigates Catholic lineage, one finds a dubious and nebulous picture of the Afro-American, his worship life, service to the church, and accomplishments. Quite often this "gray picture" leads blacks, as well as whites, nationally and locally, to conclude that because blacks in the Catholic Church are few in number his contributions have been small. This is not so.

The need for historical facts about the treatment and experience of the Afro-American in the Catholic Church is a major stumbling block to many white Catholics who want to serve in the black community. Too, those working in the black community do so without a sense of, or a feeling for, the past religious experience of Afro-Americans. But for black people many of these experiences can be brought to life at the drop of a hat, or repressed out of respect for, or fear of, the Church. This lack of knowledge then becomes a block to uninformed persons serving the black community.

I do not claim to offer all the facts surrounding the black experience in the Catholic Church, but I'm hoping that this will stimulate further discussion and research. My use of the term Church is inclusive of all aspects of the Catholic Corporate Community, i.e., its rules, regulations, administration, theology, history, programs, etc.; as it reflects the black man's situation.

The silence surrounding blacks in the Catholic Church needs more exploration. It tells us much about the people, the leaders and the position of the Catholic Church in the U.S.A. Specifically, it introduces us to the ineffectiveness of the Corporate Church in dealing with a small number of black people who found themselves forced into its ranks. The black man's absence from Church history was not by choice but by a strange commitment to a developing church structure that did not reserve a place in its development for its black believers. However, the tireless efforts of individual white Catholics is not dealt with in the book, but is in its own right a story that needs to be told.

This information is presented to the West End Catholic Council in the hope that it can be of some use in learning about and understanding the Afro-American and his experience as Catholic. The West End Catholic Council in its attempt to effect a better life for all people of the western section of Louisville, Kentucky, can make use of this background information in

today's planning of church programs. This is a first step by the CCD Office to contribute to the religious education mission of the West End Catholic Council and the Catholic church in the black community. It is hoped that these facts will be used for growth rather than destruction by its readers and users, both black and white.

The organization of the information is done so as to reflect the black experience from 1785 to 1953. This does not take from us the beauty of those moments of happiness, but instead it enlightens us to the blind spots that may cause one more sorrow, while trying to provide a true Christian experience for all people of our Faith. Most of the information is not peculiar to the Louisville Archdiocese, but seems to have been as widespread and as accepted as the Church was itself. This information is not to be considered representative of all black Catholics, or all white Catholics, but rather some information that can help all Catholics understand (from a black perspective) the difficult times we have all experienced.

To the white Catholics—this information should be handled as history, and any similarity to today's Church should be considered an opportunity to improve our racial attitudes. To the Black Catholic, too, this information should be handled as history, with a careful eye on present day effort, so as not to distort them, even though the burden is born by you and the possibility for easing them are few.

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Chapter I

A PARADOX

A paradox in black and white exists in the Catholic Church and indeed in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky. The dictionary defines paradox as: "something inconsistent with common experience, or having contradictory qualities." There seems to be within religious circles (what many believe is) a common understanding of the Catholic Church's stand on the rights of Afro-Americans in the Catholic Community. The paradox to this is the black man's view of his position and status in this same Church and his stand in regard to that position. Because of the white understanding (or misunderstanding) of the Catholic stand on the rights of Afro-Americans, many Catholics say, "blacks don't have to consider the past in accepting the Catholic faith or its various services and programs." The thought is that the past was a good and fair past. Others say the Catholic Church and its people cannot be held responsible for present day problems in the black community or problems among the Catholic segment of that community. The feeling here is that Catholic schools, agencies and churches are all open to anyone regardless of race, and the justifying finger is pointed to what white Catholics consider to be achievements of the past when blacks began questioning the mystery of their history in the Catholic Church.

This first chapter is a look at black feelings from the individual point of view and from group point of view at the national and local level. The paradox comes to light when white Catholics justify what they feel has been Christian work among blacks, while black Catholics point out that they have been "used" by the developing church during slavery and after. Both black and white identify themselves as Roman Catholics. This obscure situation offers two views of the status and position of black people in the Catholic Church. First let us look at U.S. Christianity and the black man.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE BLACK EXPERIENCE

When looking at the black man in the Catholic Church and other Christian churches of the early days, one finds no room for pride on either side. But the Catholic Church's early view of the black man in comparison to the Protestant view should be considered. This is to say that the Catholic Church in its missionary efforts in the New World did not waiver from the doc-

trine of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. Winthrop Jordan in his investigation, title, *White Over Black* points out that: "The failure of the churches in the English colonies is the more striking because Catholic Church in the Spanish and Portuguese colonies was apparently more insistent and more successful in guarding a residue of rights for slaves. That Negro slavery in Latin colonies was of significantly if perhaps not greatly different character from slavery in the English colonies, was not owing entirely to the influence of the Catholic Church, but the outstanding rigidity and rigor of English plantation slavery and the eventual appearance of virulent racism in Anglo-America does raise the question whether the English Protestant churches were in some measure responsible."¹ Jordan notes however, that there have been numerous discussions of this matter often suffering from imprecision as to the character of English protestantism. Religion in America took some peculiar highways with the black man as a passenger.

J. Earle Thompson, Jr. in an essay titled *The Reform of the Racist Religion of the Republic*, writes about the failure of religion in general in America in dealing with black Americans. He says: "Unfortunately, the ideology of the religion of the Republic has rarely, if ever, remained free from contamination; nor has it ever been actualized in its purest form. If we were to limit our judgment strictly to the core principles of this religion, we would have to rule that they were not intrinsically idolatrous. But, having been repeatedly and even systematically violated in theory and practice, these ideals have hardly ever stayed unsullied. Alfred North Whitehead once observed that 'great ideas enter into reality with evil associates and with disgusting alliances.' The religion of the Republic's most evil associate has been racial prejudice, and its most disgusting alliance has been with discrimination. As a result both in its theoretical combination and in the ways in which it has functioned in the course of our history, the religion of the Republic has been idolatrous, substituting homage to the god of racial supremacy for loyalty to the one true God. Believing in a humane creed, white Americans have systematically oppressed and brutalized black Americans. Professing an inclusive creed, whites have carefully excluded blacks from full and equal participation in our society. Confessing a just creed, whites have rarely extended equal justice to blacks. Honoring a tolerant creed, whites have denied blacks the decision-making power that could affect the character of our institutions and better their competitive position in society. By undemocratic and unjust actions white Americans have restricted the religion of the Republic almost solely

¹Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black* (University of North Carolina Press, 1968), p. 198.

to their own kind, twisting it into a racial religion. By these actions they have perverted the religion of the Republic into an arrogant white Americanism."² With this type of Americanism having developed from the colonial days until today, one must ask about the role of the Catholic Church in the Americanization of the black Christian.

Some Catholics are proud of their work among blacks in America. They point their fingers to the Third Plenary Council of 1884 as justification of their good work. This Council, meeting in Baltimore, made it mandatory that an annual collection in all churches in the country be taken in support of the Negro and Indian mission work started by the Second Plenary Council in 1866. That collection is still being taken each year.³ The financial statement of the Negro and Indian Mission for 1969 shows the Louisville Archdiocese receiving \$16,000 from that collection.⁴

In justifying their past, still other Catholics point with pride to the fact that the Catholic Church was the first to appoint an American black man bishop of a predominantly white diocese. James Augustine Healy, was appointed Second Bishop of Portland, Maine in 1875. In 1900, the year of his death he was officially promoted to the rank of Assistant at the Papal Throne.⁵ But James' racially mixed background was unknown to the people he was overseeing.

Catholic Bishops in these later years have spoken of the race issue in general on several occasions. These statements, say some whites, show Christian concerns on the part of the Corporate Church. Four notable statements are:

- 1). The 1943 statement noting the problem facing blacks.
- 2). The 1958 statement, Discrimination and the Christian Conscience.
- 3). The 1963 statement, On Racial Harmony.
- 4). The 1968 statement, National Race Crisis.

In the 1968 statement for the first time, the bishops speak directly of the "Catholic Problem" too, saying: "Catholics, like the rest of American society must recognize their responsibility for allowing these conditions to persist . . ." Further, there are certain tasks which we must acknowledge remain the unfinished business of the Catholic religious community. First among

²Elwyn A. Smith, editor, *The Religion of the Republic* (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1971), p. 270.

³John T. Gillard, S.S.J., *Colored Catholics in the United States* (The Josephite Press, Baltimore, 1941), pp. 112-116.

⁴*Our Negro and Indian Missions Annual Report of the Secretary of the Commission for the Catholic Missions Among the Colored People and Indians*, January, 1970, p. 36.

⁵Albert S. Foley, S.J., *Bishop Healy, Beloved Outcast* (Farrar, Straus and Young, New York, 1954).

these is the total eradication of any elements of discrimination in our parishes, schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, and similar institutions. . . ." In general the black man in the United States as a Christian and as a Catholic was subjected to many words of wisdom and acts of good faith, none of which carried with them tools for eliminating the white Catholic's inhumanity to his black brother.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION AND THE BLACK MAN

The Americanization of black Catholics was attempted through the Catholic Educational System. Education is a main-spring in Catholic doctrine. The Second Vatican Council has considered with care how extremely important education is in the life of man and how its influence ever grows in the social progress of this age.⁶

While these things are recognized and there has been an attempt made to educate blacks in the Catholic tradition, blacks are generally absent from this tradition. Most black Catholics are educated in the public schools. There is, however, a Catholic consolidated school program in the inner city of Louisville. In parishes like that of St. Monica's in Bardstown, Kentucky, which has been historically a black education effort, now has a predominantly white school attendance.

They, too, received funds from the national collection (directly or indirectly) of our Negro and Indian Missions' Fund, supposedly to help meet the educational needs of black and Indian Catholics. This change in color at St. Monica school and others like it, is said to be due to consolidation and integration of the black and white schools. The Catholic educational effort was and still is, basically white in nature from elementary through college.

Neither has the CCD Program been of much help; nor has it been effective in helping to educate blacks in the parishes of our nation or the archdioceses that have large concentrations of blacks.

Louis T. Achille, in an article titled, "The Catholic Negro in The Confraternity," published in the *Interracial Review*, December, 1941, gives "a stirring appeal for Negro leaders in the Catechetical apostolate. Here is an opportunity [he says] to capitalize hours of leisure to awaken in them the inner spring of leadership, which lies not in the intellect, but in the will. Students in non-Catholic colleges should make Catholic action an integral part of their four years to develop this responsibility."⁷ Though he is talking to college students, this is gen-

⁶National Catholic Welfare Conference. Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education*, (October 28, 1965).

⁷Sister Mary Anthony Scally, R.S.M., *Negro Catholic Writers 1900-1943*, (Walter Romig, Michigan, 1945), *The Catholic Federation for the Promotion of Better Race Relations*.

erally true. The appeal is still a justified challenge to CCD and religious education operations across the country.

BLACK PROTEST

While black Protestants went on to build and administer their own churches, black Catholics were sticking with the Roman Church in the United States. This loyalty was not without protest about the inhuman treatment of them. This takes us to the other side of the paradox. Where black religious personnel and black laymen in the Catholic Church steadily protest about the system in a national voice. These protests are heard from black individuals and groups. Two individual examples at the national level are:

Father Lawrence Lucas, a black priest in New York City, who expresses himself in his recent book, *Black Priest White Church*: "The Roman Catholic Church in America is a white racist institution—It looks white, thinks white, acts white. Insensitive to black people, white interests control its every move and decision. Black people are a tolerated and controlled group that have no power—I am angry and disappointed. . . ."⁸

John Howard Griffin voices his protest in his book, *The Church and the Black Man*. He begins with these words from Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*: "before we can have truth we must first eradicate all traces of racism. . . ." Griffin closes by saying: "In summation, Black Catholics, whether priests, religious, or laymen feel that they are very much a fringe area participant in a white religious institution. Perhaps there is just cause for the feeling. In relation to black people and their affairs, and even to the vitality of Catholicism in the black community, there is still a very prevalent and noticeable missionary atmosphere pervading the Church."⁹

Individuals locally give these comments:

Sister Patricia Haley, the first American black sister to work full time in the Louisville Archdiocese, and one of two black sisters known in the archdiocese today says: "The Catholic Church has been a tragic witness to its own history as related to the black man. This is very evident in the few numbers of black religious men and women. Very few have felt free enough to identify with the ministry. However, I'm mystical enough to believe that the church can deal in the true Spirit of Christ Jesus if it 'wills' to do so. The Church in Louisville has made some reluctant moves in the area of the ministry. The concept of universality and respect for all peoples is not yet fully understood nor practiced."

⁸Lawrence Lucas, *Black Priest White Church* (Random House, 1970).

⁹John Howard Griffin, *The Church and the Black Man* (Pflaum Press, Dayton, Ohio, 1969).

Mr. Charles David is president of the Parish Council of the Holy Cross Church in Louisville, a church that was formerly an all-white parish, but is now in a racially changed neighborhood. Mr. David says, "The Catholic Church in the U.S.A. has committed the sin of political appeasement. Christian racism is the most cancerous sickness in the church and hence society today. Because of the Church's failure to take the leadership in developing Christ-like attitudes toward black folk it finds itself like a storm-wrecked ship. It has the wisdom but not the force to command the will of God.

It's questionable whether the Bishops really believe that a Son of God has come to show the way. Of course, they do a lot of nice super white, middle class things for 'colored folks' behind closed doors and those things are ten safe years behind the local, federal and industrial power structures. However, I pray for the sake of the love of the real truth, that my brothers and sisters will keep the faith."

BLACK GROUP PROTEST

Protesting black groups today are affiliated with the National Office for Black Catholics. This organization in one of its brochures states its purpose: To create a foundation for the revitalization of the church in the black community, action is needed today." Four such groups in this structure are:

The National Black Catholic Clergy Caucus is a group which is similarly concerned, as NOBC. It was organized in Detroit, Michigan in 1968.

The Black Brothers and Seminarians. This is a group of seminarians and brothers whose purpose statement was given at their meeting in 1970 at Notre Dame University. It says in part: "The Seminary education is not preparing either white or black seminarians to be of use to the Black Community."

Laymen express their dissatisfaction through the National Black Catholic Lay Caucus. Two of their stated aims are: "To create national awareness of Black Lay Catholics in the Church," and "To develop a communication network between Black Lay Catholics over the country." This group held a national convention of Black Lay Catholics in August of 1970 in Washington, D.C.

One of the strongest black groups is The National Black Sisters Conference. This group states in their preamble: "Through the power of God black religious women, who are in covenant with God to serve His Kingdom, do now create an inclusive cooperative organization of black religious women of the United States of America to testify against individual and institutional racism found in the society and the church, to work unceasingly

to our unity and mission by being the organ through which we can be with one another in prayer, study, fellowship and co-operative action."

The N.B.S.C. was organized in Detroit in 1968. The newer groups feel they are essential to effective black input in the Catholic Church structure. While some argue that these groups are not necessary because of the oneness of the Church, black expression finds few avenues for communication within the corporate Church which seems ill-equipped for understanding the problem and all its ramifications.

Surprising to most, black liberation groups are not new in the Catholic Church. There was organized in the early days of the church a group called the Federation of Colored Catholics of the United States, which was organized in Washington, D.C. in 1925 as a protest group. They had a publication called *The Chronicle*.¹⁰ This paper kept communication open among blacks. *The Catholic Historical Review* gives a brief background: "The Federated Colored Catholics grew out of the Committee for the Advancement of Colored Catholics formed at St. Augustine Parish in Washington during World War I. Its immediate objective was to obtain the appointment of trained Catholic Negroes as social workers in military camps; its larger goal was to eliminate discrimination within the Catholic Church."¹¹ "It [the paper] was founded at St. Elizabeth's Church, St. Louis, Missouri, and under the name of *The Chronicle* became the organ of the Federated Colored Catholics."¹²

Preceding the Federation, several Catholic Afro-American Congresses, as they then were called, had been held between 1889 and 1894. They too had a publication; it was called *American Catholic Tribune*. The Tribune was printed for and by Negro Catholics. Daniel A. Rudd was editor of the Cincinnati based Tribune. Rudd founded the congresses and their purpose was, "to cooperate with the clergy in the conversion and education of the Negro race and to gather information on the scattered Negro Catholics in the Country."¹³ Among the first officers chosen to lead the congresses was a Louisvillian, Richard Sansbury, who was the sergeant-at-arms. The emergence of these groups of the past let us know that all was not well between blacks and whites in the Catholic religion.

LOCAL CATHOLICS

Local efforts in the Louisville archdiocese mirror national

¹⁰Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

¹¹David Spalding, C.F.X., *The Negro Catholic Congresses, 1889-1894*, from *The Catholic Historical Review* (October, 1969), Vol. LV, No. 3, p. 357.

¹²Scally, *op. cit.*

¹³Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

trends. The subtle assumption that blacks generally feel their situation in the Church is acceptable has trickled down to the local Churchman and his community. Local events and local figures are used to show how good white-black relations are. For instance, Father Charles Nerinckx work with blacks is often pinpointed.

Father Nerinckx was an early pioneer who started many things. He made an attempt at establishing a black sisterhood as early as 1824. This attempt at a black sisterhood was made under the administration of the Fourth Mother Superior of the Sisters of Loretto at Loretto, Kentucky—said to be the first such attempt made in the nation. However, it did not materialize.¹⁴

The Catholic Student Crusaders are pointed out, and in a news article from *The Record*, a Catholic newspaper, we get this report: "At the 1933 convention of the Crusade, the National President, Archbishop McNicholas, intrusted the Louisville delegates with the task of inducing the convention delegates to declare their stand on the Negro Missions. The resolution prepared and presented by the Louisville delegates was adopted unanimously. The interest thus aroused among the half million crusaders established the Louisville delegation at the 1938 Dubuque convention, as the National Champions for Negro Missions. The Apostolic Delegate himself personally thanked the members of the Louisville Delegation for having drawn the Crusade into this Mission field."¹⁵

The local pride is also stimulated and white finger of justification is pointed to 1950 when as a result of an amendment to the 1904 Kentucky Day Law, some Catholic Colleges started admitting black students.¹⁶

While these facts and others are well taken and good intentions are admirable, blacks today still severely criticize their white brothers as having double approaches to Christianity in Catholicism.

WHERE DO BLACKS WORSHIP?

Having chosen not to separate from the Church, blacks worship in one of several main ways in the Louisville archdiocese today:

Number One. The black Catholic worships in the predominantly black congregation that is or was known as the "colored

¹⁴Anna C. Minogue, *Loretto Annals of the Century* (The American Press, 1912), pp. 95-97.

¹⁵*The Record*. "Negro Missions of the Louisville Diocese." Sec. 2LVII, (Feb. 27, 1936).

¹⁶Brother Evan Enos, C.F.X., *Development of Negro Education Under Catholic Auspices in Kentucky*. August, 1951. Boston College Graduate School, Dept. of Ed., a thesis.



Catholic Church." These black congregations are pastored or administered by white religious or international personnel.

Number Two. Black Catholics worship in formerly all white churches which are now predominantly all black, a result of changing neighborhood housing patterns. This group of churches, with the exception of Holy Cross in Louisville are pastored by white priests.

Number Three. Blacks worship in formerly all-white parishes that are rapidly moving toward becoming all black. These churches are pastored by white pastors.

Number Four. Black Catholics worship in predominantly white churches which have had a history of large black attendance on a segregated basis.

Number Five. Black Catholics by choice worship in predominantly white congregations administered and pastored by white priests and religious.

Number Six. A new type of parish life style for blacks and whites is found in the establishment of the St. Mary of Perryville Church at Perryville, Kentucky. It is a mission of St. Peter and Paul Church of Danville, Kentucky. Here blacks and whites of the Perryville community have established a church based on a common need. The church was founded in December of 1969, with nine black families and seven white families. This development is an interlude to the Catholic tradition of establishing missions on the basis of race or ethnic background. While there are some problems it is a pleasure to see this community move in the direction it is going.

Socially, the Catholic church has, on paper, been a forward church in fighting for social equality. However, it still remains that the Church has been unable or unwilling to move practically in helping its white members to understand how to apply its doctrine in building better social relations among its black, white and other ethnic members under its ministry. Although culturally different persons worship together in the same churches to some extent, Catholic civic, social, and fraternal groups, both black and white, find no grounds for much social assimilation.

BLACK CATHOLICS STATISTICALLY

After viewing this paradox, one must ask the question, "Who then, are black Catholics?"—Nationally, black Catholics number about 837,000, or close to 2 percent of the 47,468,333 Catholic population, based on 1969-70 data.

In regard to the black population in the Catholic Church, our Negro and Indian Missions Report of 1969 gives the following account: "The nineteen sixties were a decade of continued fruitfulness and progress in missionary and pastoral work among the Negroes in this country. An outstanding feature in the record is an increase of thirty-five percent or 220,000 in the number of Catholic Negroes during this period. This increase has brought up to a total of 837,000 the number of Negroes reported to be Catholics at present. This gain was due largely to the accession of converts, 127,389 of these having been reported. The baptisms of children of Catholic parents also contributed, of course, to the total increase.

Back of these developments were steadily increasing numbers of mission establishments, and of churches and schools that are operated in entirely or predominantly Negro neighborhoods, and a corresponding increase in the personnel assigned to them. Works of mercy, spiritual and temporal, on behalf of Negroes, have also multiplied in a measure impossible to calculate."¹⁷ The strong mission pride in these numbers don't tell the full story.

Black Catholics are represented nationally by 168 black priests, or less than one percent of the 59,803 priests, and by 127 black religious brothers, or little more than one percent of the 12,261 religious brothers; by 900 black nuns, or less than one percent of the 176,341 nuns, and by one black Auxiliary Bishop out of the 294 hierarchy.

The Catholic Church's membership is heavily concentrated in the large urban centers in the north and the eastern United States. Prior to World War II, the bulk of the Negro population was rural, and concentrated in the south. Until recent years, therefore, there was relatively little contact between the Catholic Church and black Americans. This has been the big escape valve for low Catholic interest in the real problem of its black people. The one exception to this general situation of numbers has been Louisiana, where, since the days of French Louisiana there has been a large Negro Catholic community. Even today, more than 21% of all black American Catholics live in Louisiana.¹⁸

¹⁷Our Negro and Indian Missions, 1969, Annual Report (January, 1970), p. 3.

¹⁸William D. Broderick, *The Catholic Church and Black America in 1970—A Case Study*, Department of State, Foreign Service Institute; Twelfth Session Senior Seminar in Foreign Policy, (Washington, D.C., 1969-1970), p. 1.

LOCAL BLACK CATHOLICS STATISTICALLY

Around the turn of the century, the bulk of the black Catholic population in the Louisville archdiocese lived in and around the Hardin, Nelson and Washington County areas. The majority of black Catholics now live in Western Louisville, an area once heavily Catholic and restricted to the black population.¹⁹

Locally, blacks in the archdiocese of Louisville number about 5,500 or a little more than two percent of the 196,537 total. They are represented in the archdiocese by one black priest out of 437 total; by one black brother out of 144 total and two black nuns out of 1,482 total.²⁰ No black clergy or religious are working in black rural communities.

SUMMARY

So there are black believers at prayer in white Americanized religious institutions. These white institutions and their people however, must learn how to be with its black members in a spirit of holiness and truth. They must learn to recruit and evangelize the man they have historically "missionized"—missionized in the name of institutional need for "christian labor" and "church obligation." This, the mission atmosphere, has served only to invite the black man into the Catholic Church for a suspicious look at an alternative to the Black Church, a Church with which blacks are so familiar.

The question is how much influence (did or does) the Catholic religion have on the African American as he faces the day to day truth of his black existence; or is the Catholic religion just another reflection of that frustration?

So, the paradox of a communion within a communion still remains, and one may ask now, "What then has been the experience of the black person in this Christian church, characterized by its many ethnic groups, that prevented communication with blacks?" And "what contribution to the Catholic church in the Louisville archdiocese has the black man made?"

This chapter has been an attempt to look quietly at the overall situation. Let us now look at some of the experiences of the past that can lead to formation of an understanding of present-day attitudes of many black Catholics.

¹⁹Louisville and Jefferson County Human Relations Commission: *Facts for Action*, 1966.

²⁰Some total figures were taken from the 1970 *Official Directory*, published annually by P. J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1970—other figures were given to me by the West End Catholic Council Office.

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Chapter II

BLACK CATHOLICS COMING TO KENTUCKY (1785 through 1830's)

We find the first black Catholics coming into Kentucky, prior to statehood, around 1785. This was during a time when the population was increasing in the Kentucky area at a fantastic rate. These pioneers came from the Carolinas, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland to settle in Kentucky, bringing with them some slaves. Most of them were of Scottish, Irish, English, German and French lineage. Blacks, who were Catholics, came to Kentucky from Maryland, primarily with their masters who were fleeing religious persecution there.

Gillard in *Colored Catholics in the United States* puts it this way: "In Kentucky there were several settlements of Catholics who had gone there; beginning in 1774 [we question the date] to escape the intolerable conditions existing in Maryland: at Pottinger's Creek, Hardin's Creek, Bardstown, Froman's Creek. Many of these settlers had slaves."²¹

The Maryland background is important to the understanding of the Catholic handling of black slaves. Under favorable conditions, the colony of Maryland began in 1634 as a result of George Calvert Baltimore's (First Lord Baltimore) desire to establish a heaven for Roman Catholics.

Maryland did not remain in its Catholic form for long. Gillard points out that "In 1650 the Puritans who had been welcomed by the Catholics of Maryland (practically being run out of the Colony of Virginia which, by a law passed in 1643, required conformity with the worship and discipline of the Church of England), rose in rebellion against the Catholic proprietors of Maryland and seized the government. Catholics were proscribed and suffered great persecution, their chapels and mission houses were despoiled, all but one of their priests were forced to flee, and they were declared ineligible to be either members or electors in the General Assembly."²²

In 1660, the government was restored to Lord Baltimore and the Protestants held the edge in decisions in colonial affairs. However, "Servants" as Catholics liked to call them were the rule rather than the exception. The Rt. Rev. John Tracy Ellis states: "From the earliest settlements of the 1630's in colonial Maryland the Catholic plantation owners were indistinguishable from their non-Catholic neighbors in the purchase and use of Negro slaves. In fact, most of the well-to-do Maryland Catholics

²¹Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 45-48.

retained their slaves until relatively late, Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore having manumitted his 'black servant Charles' only a month before his death in December, 1815."²³

Black slaves coming to Kentucky with their masters had been subjected to more than a century of toil under a Maryland slave code which for cruelty and general inhumanity had no equal. Here is the situation in 1664: "The harsh realities of a land-rich but labor-scarce economy had become increasingly apparent to the Maryland settlers and to their proprietor, Lord Baltimore. By 1664, the Maryland Colonial Assembly was ready to impose, by force of law, the status of perpetual slavery upon Negro slaves and their offspring. Clear overtones of racism likewise fixed the status of slavery upon the offspring of any freeborn English woman who produced a child by a Negro slave. While Negroes had formerly shared with other servants the opportunities for eventual freedom and independence, laws of this kind during the last third of the seventeenth century marked a sharp turning point in the Negro's legal position and marked the path to bondage, which he would begin walking in colonial America."²⁴

Here is that document referred to in the preceding excerpt. "An Act concerning Negroes and other slaves"—"Be it enacted by the Right Honorable the Lord Proprietary by the advise and consent of the upper and lower house of this present General Assembly, that all Negroes or other slaves already within the province, and all Negroes and other slaves to be hereafter imported into the province, shall serve *durante vita*. And all children born of any Negro or other slave shall be slaves as their fathers were, for the term of their lives. And forasmuch as divers freeborn English women, forgetful of their free condition and to the disgrace of our nation, marry Negro slaves, by which also divers suits may arise touching the issue of such women, and a great damage befalls the masters of such Negroes for prevention whereof, for deterring such freeborn women from such shameful matches.

Be it further enacted by the authority, advise, and consent aforesaid, that whatsoever freeborn women shall marry any slave from and after the last day of this present Assembly shall serve the master of such slave during the life of her husband. And that all the issue of such freeborn women so married shall be slaves as their fathers were. And be it further enacted, that all the issues of English or other freeborn women that have already married Negroes shall serve the masters of their par-

²³Rt. Rev. John Tracy Ellis, *The Catholic Church and The Negro* (Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington, Indiana, 46750, 1970), p. 3.

²⁴Albert P. Blaustein and Robert L. Zangrando, *Civil Rights and the Black American. A Documentary History*, (Washington Square Press, 1968), pp. 8-9.

ents till they be thirty years of age and no longer.”²⁵

THE KENTUCKY LIFE

The Maryland Catholics came to Kentucky with their slaves and in Webb's Book, *Catholicity in Kentucky*, he talks about the early Catholic settlements in and near Bardstown prior to its incorporation in 1792. One such settlement was an Irish group at lower Cox's Creek, afterwards better known as Fairfield, about seven miles from Bardstown. This group has been there almost from the beginning of the century. The Celtic tongue was almost exclusively spoken by the families of the colonies. He tells in a footnote of the first black child brought to that settlement. "The first slave property to come into the colony is said to have been a Negro boy-child of five years of age, bought by a Mr. Tuell at a public sale of an insolvent debtor's estate. In connection with this negro boy, I remember to have heard an amusing anecdote related by the late Daniel Dwyer, Sr., at the time, nearly half a century ago, [around 1834] a leading grocer in Louisville. I was his guest and seated at his own table when he related the incident: 'The Irish settlers on Cox's Creek,' said Mr. Dwyer, 'had been my customers for many years. It pleased them to deal with a countryman who could speak their own mother tongue. One day I was waited on by one of their number, Patrick Tuell by name, who bought of me a pretty large bill of goods. His instructions were that the goods should be delivered to his negro wagoner, who would call for them on the following morning. Since you must have observed it, Mr. Webb, I need not tell you that what is known as the brogue of my country is in my case ineradicable. Though it is something of which I am not ashamed, and have no right to be ashamed, I am not a little sensitive to this mimicry by those who have it not. Well, on the following morning after I had closed by business transaction with Mr. Tuell, a negro fellow, some twenty years of age, entered the store, and with as honest a Tipperary brogue as ever fell from tongue, asked for his "master's groceries." I had but one idea, and that was, that black rascal was trying to imitate my own manner of speech. Picking up an axe-helve, I made after him, and he, frightened at my demonstrative attitude, backed out of the store and leaped into the wagon that was standing in the middle of the street.

Turning to me before he could reach the saddle horse of his team, with a most piteous look, he asked, in native Irish, what he had done to offend me. I was utterly confounded, you may be sure, and the weapon I held dropped to the pavement as from a nerveless hand. Questioning the boy, I found that he had been brought up from childhood in his master's family, where he had

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

not only naturally contracted the brogue which I had regarded as mere mimicry, but had learned with the other children, to understand and speak the Celtic of the family's daily intercommunications."²⁶

With many disadvantages facing them, the missionary church in general in the new world had problems with the laity, priest, outsiders and the pioneer life itself. Some of these problems are brought to light by Bishop Carroll in a report to Cardinal Antonelli. Bishop Carroll was upon his consecration in 1790 the Bishop of what was then the entire United States. Bishop Carroll says: "As for piety, they are for the part sufficiently assiduous in the exercise of religion and in frequenting the sacraments, but they lack that fervor which frequent appeals to the sentiment of piety usually produced, as many congregations hear the word of God only once a month, and sometimes only once in two months. We are reduced to this by want of priests, by the distance of the congregations from each other, and by difficulty of traveling. This refers to Catholics born here, for the condition of the Catholics who are flocking here in great numbers from different countries in Europe is very different. For, while there are but few of our native Catholics who do not approach the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist at least once a year, especially at Easter time, you can scarcely find any among the newcomers who discharge this duty of religion, and there is reason to fear that the example will be very pernicious, especially in commercial towns.

The abuses that have grown up among Catholics are chiefly those which result from unavoidable intercourse with non-Catholics, and the example thence derived, namely, more free intercourse between young people of opposite sexes than is compatible with chastity in mind and body, too great fondness for dances and similar amusements, and an incredible eagerness, especially in girls, for reading love stories, which are brought over in great quantities from Europe. Then, among other things, a general lack of care in instructing their children, and especially the negro slaves, in their religion, as these people are kept constantly at work, so that they rarely hear any instructions from the priest, unless they spend a short time with him, and most of them are consequently very dull in faith and depraved in morals. It can scarcely be believed how much trouble and care they give the pastors of souls."²⁷

One wonders if the concern expressed about the slave situation went any further than the comments themselves or if the

²⁶Hon. Ben Webb, Jr., *Catholicity in Kentucky* (J. C. Webb and Company, Louisville, Kentucky, 1884), pp. 64-65.

²⁷Rev. W. J. Howlett, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx*, (Mission Press, S.V.D., Techny Illinois, 1915), pp. 82-83.

interest lay only in the number of people that could be won over to the Catholic side. This white view of the black slave (very dull and depraved in morals) leaves a question about what and who should receive the instructions; the overworked slave or proud master. The slave system was accepted by white Catholics then, as newer systems of discrimination are accepted now; as a necessary injustice that was fully understood and appreciated by its victims. So long as the injustice is within religious boundaries it is considered to be a "better life."

NAZARETH

Such was the case at Nazareth College, in the development of the college and program of training for the Sisters of Charity that began in 1812. The novices coming to the school for training (to become nuns) brought with them a dowry (as required) to help take care of the expenses and upkeep in that day. For many of the girls the medium of exchange in meeting that requirement was black slaves. Slaves were brought from their farms and turned over to the school as their dowries or as part of their dowry requirement.²⁸

The first group of slaves provided the school with a continuous line of free labor through their children and their children's children until the school set its last thirty slaves free on January 1, 1865. The following statement reflected the master's pride, hurt and fears at the loss of this free labor. "We have about thirty counting the children; namely, all were born and raised here; they are devoted to Nazareth and the news far from giving them joy has caused quite a lamentation to arise among them." They say, "Mr. Government set me free, I don't know him. I've lived here all my life and I'm too old now to go about the wide world with nobody and nothing. If I know Mr. Government, I'd go to him and say 'you give me a house and everthing I want in it.' Aunt Jane, there is a comfortable home for you where you shall want nothing as long as you live. I'd say "much oblige to you sir." I have a good home and you turn me out to do for myself, perhaps to die with nobody to care for me and you call that setting me free.' Such seems to be the sentiment of many good and faithful servants. Others eager for liberty and novelty seem to be filled with bright anticipation that they are an ideal and arrogant set who it is feared will give much to suffer to the white population."²⁹

A good picture of the aspiration of black slaves for their freedom and the lack of understanding on the part of the masters, as to why the slave would want to leave that which whites felt

²⁸The information about the use of slave for dowries seems to be generally accepted fact according to local blacks and the Archivist at Nazareth.

²⁹Slaves Set Free, (Nazareth College, Nazareth, Kentucky, January 1, 1865), p. 16.

was great comfort, is best reflected in a statement attributed to Mark Twain in a book titled, *Dreams From the Road*: "He talked out loud all the time while I was talking to myself. He was saying how the first thing he would do when he got to a free state he would go to saving up money and never spend a single cent, and when he got enough he would buy his wife, which was owned on a farm close to where Miss Wetson lived; and they would both work to buy the two children, and if their masters wouldn't sell them, they'd get an ab'litionist to go and steal them.

"It most froze me to hear such talk. He wouldn't ever dared to talk such talk in his life before. Just see what a difference it made in him the minute he judged he was about free. It was according to the old saying, "Give a nigger an inch and he'll take an ell." Thinks I, this is what comes of my not thinking. Here was this nigger which I had as good as helped to run away, coming right out flat-footed and saying he would steal his children—children that belonged to a man I didn't even know; a man that hadn't ever done me no harm." Mark Twain.³⁰

There were at least 114 slaves baptized at Nazareth College from 1812 through 1865. Eighty-eight had been children there, 14 were men and 12 were women.³¹ I found only two indications of a husband-wife team though the church supposedly encouraged family life. Some individual family members were taken from Nazareth to other places to work and their children were left behind. One such separation is indicated in a letter from Mother Francis Gardner (fourth Mother Superior) to Sister Claudia Elliott at St. Mary's in Nashville. In the letter there are references to slaves who went from Nazareth to Nashville and Sister is telling them about their children left at Nazareth, and the kind of work they are doing. The letter reads in part "give my love to Issabella. Tell her I don't forget her. Tell her little Sue is much grown and a pretty and smart and spoiled little thing. That Ellen is a very good girl and irons the caps and the collars of the Sisters as well as Sister Ann says anyone can do. And besides she sews very well; helps in the church and works in the garden. She is a real little woman. Rachel has grown too and on days of washing, she cooks for all the family. . . ."³²

Forty-seven years after the slaves were freed from Nazareth, the sisters, during the centennial celebration in 1912, invited most of their former servants and their children back to the

³⁰Brad Nills, *Dreams from the Road* (St. Mary's College Press, Winona, Minnesota, 1970), p. 64.

³¹Duplicate of Baptismal Register, Nazareth, *Nazareth Slaves and Children*, p. 159-160.

³²Letters of Mother Francis Gardiner, Fourth Superior, Sisters of Nazareth, Nazareth, Kentucky, p. 11.

school as part of that program.³³



Centennial Day for the faithful old servants of Nazareth and their children. Photograph taken on the Nazareth laundry porch on October 19, 1912 (from the Nazareth Archives, Nazareth, Kentucky).

Rev. W. J. Howlett in writing of the life of the early pioneer Father Nerinckx, says of these people: "Kentucky fared somewhat better in the class of settlers farming its pioneer population. They were not raw emigrants from Europe with their entire worldly possessions in a single chest or bag. They were mostly from old settlements in Maryland, and were better fitted by experience and better provided with means to meet the conditions."³⁴

CATHOLIC STYLE OF SLAVERY

But still for the black slave of Catholics, life as a Catholic did not mean much. As property they were traded and handed down from one Catholic to another as the system required. Catholics were however willing to baptize their slaves and allow some to marry, though many did not live together.

The black man through his blood, sweat and tears, was an intricate part of the Roman Church's successful development in the U.S.A. and the Louisville archdiocese. In a handwritten

³³Anna Blanche McGill, *The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Kentucky* (Encyclopedia Press, New York, 1917).

³⁴Rev. W. J. Howlett, *Life of Rev. Charles Nerinckx* (Mission Press, S.V.D., Techny Illinois, 1915), p. 83.

copy of the Last Will and Testament of Thomas Howard of Nelson County giving his property to the Catholic church, we see the black man being handed down. Also we see him being given to the church as part of the property by the Catholic slave system.

"LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THOMAS HOWARD OF NELSON COUNTY AND STATE OF KENTUCKY. May 28, 1810.

First, I give, and bequeath the Negro girls, Betty and Elizabeth to my beloved wife Ann Howard and her heirs forever, provided she remains single.

Second, I give and bequeath to my said beloved wife . . . also the Negro Harry, Henny and Steven, . . .

Third, I give and bequeath to my beloved niece, Mary Cissell and her heirs forever a Negro child named Anna, about fourteen months old . . .

Fourth, . . . I do will, give, bequeath and devise to the said Rev. Steven Theodore Badin, Rev. Charles Nerinckx and the [then] Roman Catholic Bishop of Kentucky the following property to be enjoyed by them and the survivors and survivor and the lawful heirs of the last survivor forever of the last survivor forever, to wit the Land and Plantation I bought of Charles Campbell and a Negro man named Clemmy . . .

JESTI Rev. Grayson, CNC

A Copy...Atty. W. J. Dalmazzo...County Clerk"³⁵

The farm later became the St. Thomas Seminary, established in 1811, and the tradition of using black humans to develop the church was in a real sense a part of the curriculum.

Rev. Howlett in writing about the old St. Thomas Seminary at Poplar Neck, Kentucky, prior to its closing in 1869, tells about student life at the seminary during school vacations. In doing so he gives us too, the white side of a dark picture about the "fun loving servants" at the school. As he presents it, life for the servants could not have been better. He says, "The Negro servants about the place were the genuine Southern darkies with all their simplicity, good humor and cuteness.

It is told of old fat Charity, that one day she was wobbling past the study hall with a ducklike motion during the hour of spiritual reading, just when the reader came to the quotation from St. Paul,—'Charity is patient, is kind, charity envieth not,' etc., and sticking her head in at the door, she said: 'What's dat you's a'saying 'bout me?' Another, was old Friday. He could play the fiddle pretty well, but could scarcely spell out his own name. Some of the students persuaded him that, as he had been so long at the Seminary, all that he needed was a little Latin to

³⁵The above will was taken from the records books of Saint Thomas Church near Bardstown, Kentucky. It is given in part: Vol. I, 1826-1870.

become a priest. So he procured an old rag of a Latin grammar and used to spend hours pouring over it. One day in his absence his cabin took fire and was burned to the ground. When Friday came home and saw the ruin he was inconsolable. Father Russell thought to cheer him up by telling him that the loss was not very great, for his fiddle had been saved, and a new cabin was easily built. Poor old Friday shook his head and said mournfully: 'I doan ky-ar nuffin 'bout dat ol' fiddle, but I's so sorry dat I los' my Latin grammar.' When the Rev. Dr. Martin came from Rome to St. Thomas', it was old Friday who said: 'I reck'n we won't haf to have Dr. Mattin'ly come out f'm Ba'dstown no moah, cause we done got a doctah of our own.'"³⁶

Howlett, in his book on Father Nerinckx' life points out in telling of the hardships that priests had to go through gives these facts about black help to priests and the church: "There is no record of Father Badin ever employing a housekeeper, and it is almost certain that Father Nerinckx never did. Some of the missionaries owned a negro boy, or a negro family, and these were made use of in the domestic care of the priest's house. Sometimes a good hearted neighbor would bring a meal or a portion of a meal already prepared, sometimes they went to a neighbor's house for a meal, and if all these failed they prepared something for themselves. Father Badin had several slaves, and they probably looked after his meals when he was at home. His farm at St. Stephen's required their labor, and in those days slavery was a recognized institution, and slaves were the legitimate property of anyone who needed them and was able to own them."³⁷

Says Howlett: "In Collins' history of Kentucky it is stated that 'about 1806 Dr. Brashear of Bardstown took off at the hip joint the thigh of a mulatto boy belonging to the Catholic priest of that place,—the first case of that operation in America. The patient recovered and lived for many years.'"³⁸

Howlett informs us too that: "Perhaps the last of Father Badin's slaves died only a few years ago at New Haven, Ky. On the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of Sister M. Generose Mattingly of Loretto, Ky., this old former slave sent her the following simple but touching letter:"³⁹

'New Haven, Ky.

June 7, 1899.

'Dear Sister:

I learn from the Sisters at this place that you are still among the living, and that this day your Diamond Jubilee is being celebrated.

³⁶Rev. Wm. J Howlett, *Historical Tribute to St. Thomas' Seminary* (B. Herder, St. Louis, Mo., 1906), pp. 174-175.

³⁷Howlett, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 114.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 114.

'Sister, I remember when you taught school at Gethsemani; you was then young. I also remember when you was Superioress at Loretto. I also remember your sister, Sister Columbus. Many years with their various changes have passed since then, for I learn that you are 96, and I am 92. I must remind you that my parents and their children belonged to Father Badin, who went north as a missionary among the Indians, and left us to Father Rowen and Miss Betsey Wells. Father Badin baptized me; Father Rowan and Miss Betsey were godfather and godmother. Bishop Flaget placed Father Chabrat over the female Academy, Mother Isabella being the Superioress. We were then turned over to the female institution. Out of twelve children I am the only one left, my last brother died last October. We know now, dear Sister, that our time is very short, and I am notified by my Creator—"I come like a thief in the night—be ye ready."

'Please remember me in your prayers, and I will do likewise.

Your old servant, Jerome Boone."⁴⁰

Apparently the Catholic church while a part of the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) slave holders culture, allowed black slaves to be baptized. Webb gives us indications that some priests, like Father Badin, were enthusiastic about demanding that slave owners meet their spiritual duties to the slave. He says "His [Father Badin's] people were poor, but not the poorest among them ever complained that he was neglectful of their spiritual welfare. His rebukes of the master and mistress for neglect of duty toward their slave dependents were delivered with as much earnestness as were his counsels to patience and obedience addressed to the latter."⁴¹

The feeling that any type of slavery was reconcilable, if the owners were Christian, had its beginning in Europe. Arnold Lunn in his book, *A Saint in the Slave Trade*, Peter Claver, (first published in England in 1935 and reprinted by Sheed and Ward in 1947) made distinction between "Christian slavery" and "Pagan slavery." Lunn had feelings on the question also, and he points out that "a slave in a Christian household at least had security of tenure. He was always sure of food, clothes and a roof over his head. When he could no longer work, he had to be kept." Cardinal Gerdil (1718-1802) was spoken of by Lunn as being the last Catholic theologian who defended the limits within which slavery could be legitimately defended.

Lunn, too, apparently felt there were four titles that theologians used to justify what they believed to be lawful slavery. They were: (1) The right of just war; (2) Condemnation for crime; (3) Sale of a man by himself, or, under grave restrictions,

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 114-115.

⁴¹Webb, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

of children by their father; (4) Birth of slave mother. He does, however, point out that no theologian of his time (the early 1900's) would dream of defending the 3rd and 4th titles of lawful slavery.

It would be to the reader's advantage to read Lunn's book on St. Peter Claver's work, especially the Chapter on "The Church and Slavery" (pp. 44-60) in order to gain a better understanding of the way some Catholic Church people saw the question of slavery and Christianity. This European background gave Catholics a clear conscience on their attitudes toward the slave issue in this country. If they would baptize the slave and/or saw to it that the slave was given his freedom prior to his master's death, then they had been a fair Catholic in regard to the slave.

Baptismal records were found in several churches showing slaves being baptized. An example of this is the 1807 records of Holy Mary's Church, Calvary, Kentucky:

"Die 16 Aug. 1807 Baptizatus, est Jacobus fil. legit, Jacobi servi Jacabi Simpson et Joanne ejusdem servae.

Suscepit Henricus Servus... Viduae Abel
Die, 15, 8 bris 1807 Baptizatus, est Benedictus Fill, Illeg Cathar -
inae servae Benedicti Spalding.

Suscepit Prudentea serva... Jesue Abel."⁴²

Again, we find black Catholics being used in the development of the church. In telling of the first superiors of the Loretto Sisterhood, Anna Minogue tells of the death of Mother Ann in 1812. The same year the Loretto Sisterhood was established. She informs us that the sisters had human property also: "Mother Ann's name signed to the document transferring her negro man and her personal belongings to Father Nerinckx is all that remains to them of their first superior."⁴³

With the effort to establish a black sisterhood we see that elusive paradox developing even in these early days. The fourth Mother superior of Loretto was Mother Isabella Clark. Her first term of service ran from 1824 to 1826. Later she was again elected to serve and her term ran from 1838 to 1842. Under Mother Clark's first administration, the author points out that: "The Negro Sisterhood was established by Father Nerinckx. He seems to have appreciated the fact that the barrier of racial difference, being a natural one, should always be respected; and foreseeing, as every thoughtful person must have done, that the day would dawn when the young Republic would throw off from her limbs slavery's shameful shackles, he sought to provide for that trying period for the Negro by having a Congregation of Sisters of

⁴²Information was taken from duplicate copies of Baptismal Records of 1807 at Holy Mary's Church in Calvary, Kentucky. They were certified by Loretto Motherhouse.

⁴³Minogue, op. cit., p. 88.

their own color ready to lead them, by Christianizing and educating them, to the right enjoyment of freedom . . . The accurate and complete account of this most prophetic of the works of the holy founder perished in one of the Loretto's two sad fires. It is only known that with the end of the Colored Sisterhood in view, Father Nerinckx caused a few Negro children to be adopted and educated at Loretto, and in May, 1824 shortly before his death he wrote to Mother Bibiana at Bethania Convent: "Two days ago twelve young ladies offered themselves at Loretto for the little veil, amongst them our three blacks, who received nearly all the votes. Their dress is to be different, also their offices and employment, but they will keep the main rules of the Society; they will take the vows, but not the perpetual ones, before twelve years of profession. Their rules are set apart."⁴⁴ Yes, religious people in developing convents and religious orders adhered to the rules of segregation as well as slavery.

BLACK SLAVES AS CATHOLICS

Of course, still remaining is the question of what kind of Catholic was the black slave? Webb gives us some insights into this when he explains Father Badin's work in Kentucky and the system he used in going about his work. After the death of Father Fournier in 1803 Father Badin had to depend heavily on the laity in doing the work of the church. He says: "Even among those who had been brought up in servitude, Father Badin had his trusted helpers. Conspicuous among these, was Uncle Harry, an elderly Negro servant of one of the earliest of the colonists, whose whole life was an example of the sublimeness of christian virtue . . . On the death of his master, he became the property of infant heirs; and he was left by the executor of the estate to his own choice in the selection of his employment. He determined to go to the Salt Licks, thinking he could there earn more by his labor for the benefit of the young heirs. Father Badin, to whom he had applied for advice, endeavored to dissuade him from his purpose, and represented to him the hardships he would have to undergo; distance he would be from church and the dangers to which his salvation would be exposed.

"Uncle Harry replied to this last consideration, with admirable simplicity of faith: 'God would protect him from danger, and the Blessed Virgin would take care of him.' Father Badin yielded. At the Licks, 'Uncle Harry' was a model of pity for all. When any one of his fellow-servants was sick, it was he that was always called for. On these occasions, he did everything in his power to console and instruct the sick person, by the bedsides of whom he was wont to recite his beads, and to say

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 88.

all the prayers he knew. Some time afterwards he was publicly sold, and purchased by a man who was not a Catholic. He obtained permission to see Father Badin, whom he induced to purchase him, promising that his labor should indemnify him for whatever expense he might incur. A year or two later, Father Badin paid him a visit. He was found laboring in the field, and apparently much dejected. Being asked the reason of his sadness, he answered, that he was fearful lest he should die before he could repay his kind master the amount he had expended for his purchase. It is needless to say that he was soon comforted.

"He said prayers, morning and night, with the other servants all of whom had for him the greatest respect. He gave them the most comfortable beds, and often spent the night in prayer, taking but a brief repose on the hard floor. In the church, he always knelt as immovable as a statue, and was often there for hours before the rest of the congregation. His whole life appeared to be one continual prayer; and he died as he had lived, praying. One morning he was found dead sitting upright on a stool, his hands clasped in prayer, holding his beads, and his countenance irradiated with a smile."⁴⁵

While black slaves suffered, they worshipped too. Uncle Harry is probably an example beyond the average, but certainly gives us some idea of the strain placed on a slave to be Christian in the Roman Catholic faith of that time.

Rev. Howlett gives Father Nerinckx' view on the slave issue and probably this view best sums up the complicated paradox in which black slaves of Catholics lived and worked—yet he unknowingly is speaking about the important way blacks made their contribution to the Catholic church in its early development.

Howlett quotes Nerinckx as saying "Our plantations must support us." Howlett goes on, "We see the reason of a tract of land at every station where a church was built, and we, see, also, the necessity there was for the priests and sisters to own slaves. There was no support for the priest, sisters, or church without the land and the slaves to cultivate it, and whatever moneys were received from dues, or the surplus from the land, must go towards the building, enlarging, repairing, and furnishing of the churches." He further states, "But the system was vicious, and calculated to hold the Church back, and in fact, until slavery was abolished and the support of the Church was thrown directly and unavoidably upon the people, there were not more than twenty priests laboring in the country and small villages of the Diocese of Louisville."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 177-178

⁴⁶Howlett, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-154.

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Chapter III

CATHOLIC UNITY

During the next fifty years, (from about the late 1830's to the early 1890's) Catholics did many things that looked good, but somehow (intentionally or unintentionally) these efforts never really considered the black man and his plight in America, and among Catholics.

The pastoral letters are considered to be a guide post for the Roman church in the United States. One such letter to the laity, issued by the First Provincial Council in 1829 on the seventeenth of October, speaks of unity among Catholics. It sets the tone for oneness in the church. Here is that section of the letter dealing with Catholic unity.

"We would also draw your attention to another subject, upon which we have too often felt much pain, but thanks be to our Lord, the evil has greatly diminished. Beloved children in Christ, you are aware that the constitution of our church was formed by our blessed Savior, and that although we are commissioned to legislate to a certain extent in its concerns, we have no power to alter that constitution. By it the mode of our government is unchangeably fixed, and the great founder of our hierarchy, Christ himself, according to his promise, built his church upon Peter, as the basis upon which it was to remain secure, not only against the winds and floods, but against the efforts of the gates of hell. And some indeed he gave in this unit of faith and government to be 'Apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. And now as the body is one, but hath many members, though they may be many, yet are only one body.' So it is in the church of Christ.

"If the foot should say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body: is it not therefore of the body? And if the ear should say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it, therefore, not of the body? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God hath set the members, every one of them, in the body as it hath pleased him, and the eye cannot say to the hand: I need not thy help, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Yea, much more those that seem to be the more feeble members of the body, are more necessary; but God hath tempered the body together, giving the more abundant honour to that which wanted it, that there might be no schism in the body, but that the members might be mutually careful one for another, and if one member suffer any-

thing, all the members suffer with it; or if one member glory, all the members rejoice with it. Now you are the body of Christ and members of member.

"To us, unworthy as we are, the same Apostle who thus describes the knitting together of our members into compact unity, addresses himself, warning that we 'take heed to ourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath placed us Bishops to govern the church of God, which he hath purchased with his blood.' And indeed we may truly say with the Apostle, that 'we think God hath set us forth as the last' amongst you, because 'we are made a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men.' we are assimilated to him in many things, though we follow only at a distance in his footsteps, 'we write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as our dearest children.'

"Let no man take us to be foolish if we imitate even in this, the great model, after whom we would gladly copy. Seeing that many glory according to the flesh, we will glory also. Are we not found for your sakes in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in labour and painfulness, in watching often, in hunger and thirst, in many fastings, in cold and heat?

"Besides all those things that are without; our daily instances, the solicitude for all the churches; who is weak and we are not weak, who is scandalized and we do not burn? And in all this what can be our object?—We have not sought the stations which we fill, but with a full knowledge of their difficulties, not relying upon our own sufficiency, but upon the grace of God and your co-operation, we boldly say before the God who will judge us, that it was for your sake and for that of your children, we have taken the yoke upon us.

"We ask not your riches; for ourselves they would be useless, having food and raiment we are satisfied; we have no families to provide for, we have no relatives to enrich; to your service we have devoted ourselves, solemnly pledging our souls to God for your advantage; for you we would willingly spend and be spent. What we could save from contributions, what we could obtain in foreign nations by entreaty, what charity has entrusted to our own disposal; all this we have expended for the establishment of religion amongst you.

"For the truth of our assertions we appeal to yourselves—Are we then unworthy of your confidence? Has our conduct been domination? Before God we are conscious of many faults, and we confess and lament our imperfections; but as regards you, we have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying penance towards God and faith in our Lord

Jesus Christ, wherefore we take you witness today, that we are free from the blood of all; for we have not been wanting to declare to you all the counsel of God."⁴⁷

What did the Bishops mean and who were they speaking to? Among the signers of the above document was Bishop Flaget, of (then) Bardstown. To the black man, however, these words of unity did not consider him. They meant he was to continue being a Catholic and a slave who happened to be a piece of property and un-united.

THE CATHOLIC SLAVE SYSTEM

The church in the United States begins formation of its hierarchy with the First Provincial Council. Gillard gives us some information on one effort that the Council made; "The First Provincial Council of the United States was held in Baltimore in October of 1829. During this Council all except one of its leaders visited the school for colored children taught by the recently founded colored Oblate Sisters of Providence near St. Mary's Seminary, 'to study the first colored Catholic school in operation, and the rules and constitutions of the community that made it possible.' In one group came Archbishop Whitfield of Baltimore, Bishops Fenwick of Boston, Flaget of Bardstown [now Louisville], and Rosati of St. Louis, also Fathers Brute and Blanc, future Bishops of Vincennes and New Orleans."⁴⁸ They were impressed by what they saw and their interest grew though nothing was done. This expression of interest, while good, did little to change the situation. We find indications of the lack of change in various newspaper articles. The Catholic Advocate in its classified ads has notices of the following type:

"Ranaway from the subscribers on the 16th of last month (May) a mulatto boy named Alick, or Alexander, belonging to George P. Kelley, near Raywick, Marion Co. Ky. Said boy is about 19 or 20 years of age, 5 feet 4 or 5 inches high; hair rather inclined to be sandy than very black; face rather reddish, is fond of whiskey; had besides his working clothes, a blue cloth coat, brown casnet pants, and spotted velvet vest.

"Also—on the 3rd of June, a mulatto man named Henry, belonging as above described, said Henry is about 23 years of age, five feet 2 or 3 inches high—looks pleasant and converses much better than his brother Alick—has a wife near Raywick, in which neighborhood they both likely are—had besides his working clothes, a brown cloth coat, and cassinet pants. Whoever takes up with said boys and confines them in any jail in this state, and sends us word, or brings them home, shall receive Fifty

⁴⁷Rev. Peter Guilday, *The National Pastoral of the American Hierarchy*, 1792-1919, National Catholic Welfare Council, (Washington, D.C., 1923) pp. 31-33.

⁴⁸Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

Dollars reward, or 25 dollars for either of them—if taken out of the state 100 dollars, or 50 dollars for either of them.

Millers and Irwin.
Nelson Furnace, June, 1839"

Another example is:

"For sale—A LIKELY NEGRO WOMAN, and two children. As they are Catholics, I would prefer selling them to a person of that persuasion. Apply to

Chas. Rogan.
Near Fairfield, Ky."⁴⁹

Another is this one from the Catholic Advocate of January 26, 1836:

"Negroes For Sale. I HAVE for sale a valuable FEMALE SLAVE with 3 MALE CHILDREN. I wish to dispose of them to some person living near Bardstown, as the woman's husband lives near there. I am about to remove to Louisville, and am unwilling to separate her from her husband. I would prefer selling them to a Catholic.

Mich. J. O'Callaghan.
Apply at my residence in Fairfield, Nelson Co. Ky. Jan. 26, 1838."

Another advertisement taken from the Catholic Advocate, Volume II, April 1, 1837, No. 8:

"STOP THE RUNAWAY. [this is the title.] ABSCONDED, from my house, in Marion County Ky. on Saturday, the 25th, inst., a bright mulatto boy named TOM, about eighteen or twenty years old, 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high; pretty well proportioned and by a careless observer might be mistaken for a white person. His hair pretty straight, skin quite soft, for a person used to farming, has a prominent reddish small mole on one cheek, which one not recollected; has no beard of consequence; do not recollect that he ever shaved; has rather a subdued look when spoken to. He had on a black fur hat, nearly new, a pair of black corded cotton pantaloons, and either a blue or brown frock coat, which is not definitely recollected, and has I believe other clothing with him; as I believe he intended making his escape probably by Louisville or at some other point on the Ohio River, to Indiana, or he may have gone to the neighborhood of Mumfordsville, as he was raised there. \$20 if taken in Marion County, \$50 if taken in Kentucky or \$100 if taken out of the State, will be given for his apprehension, if confined in any jail so that I get him again.

JOHN LANCASTER, Jr.
April 1st, 4th"

Slavery was certainly a business and being Catholic did little to prevent man from enslaving a black man, for whatever gains.

While selling and catching black slaves, Catholics were baptizing them, too. We find black slaves being baptized during

⁴⁹Catholic Advocate, Volume IV, September 14, 1839.

this period and the church still holding slaves. From the records of the St. Thomas Church in Bardstown, Kentucky, we find in Volume I of the baptismal records of 1826 to 1870 this one in 1863: John F. Beedy, p. 130

"I bap. conditionally the illegitimate daug. of Jane, servant of St. Thomas. By name Mary Charlett, born the 20th of July. Spons, Margaret Ellen servant of Mrs. Minerva Speaks."

Another recording from the same records is one in 1864: John F. Beedy, p. 132.

"I bap. Nancy Ann (black woman of William Mattingly) about 24 years old."

The questions concerning the immorality of slavery in any form were more a recognized reality as part of the corporate Church policy worldwide. But the rising outcries of blacks in the U.S. Church for equality and fair treatment at this time fell on untrained ears and covered eyes.⁵⁰

Unfair treatment at the hand of Church folk was commonplace, and from talking to older living Catholics today, the author learned that black slaves could not be sponsors of other black slaves. Being bought, sold and baptized, one wonders whether it was possible for blacks to have had any meaningful worship life from it all.

THE ART OF BLACK WORSHIP



Fr. Boniface R. Hardin, O.S.B., Fr. James Lyke, O.F.M. and Fr. Joseph C. Bell, III.

Black Catholics today talk about "black liturgy" and the meaning it has to them and many ask: "If there is really an approach that includes the emotional and cultural factors commonly seen in worship at black protestant churches?" The answer is obviously "yes" and even Ben Webb, a noted Catholic Historian in the early days, would see it though he could not explain it. In telling about one of his personal experiences around 1854 when he visited the Smith family on Cartwright

⁵⁰Etienne Gibson, editor, *The Church Speaks to the Modern World* (Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), pp. 291-312.

Creek, he related an example of what I'm calling "Kentucky Catholic Soul." "The occasion was one of interest to me by reason of an incident that I propose to relate. At an early hour of the evening Mr. Smith invited me into the room adjoining the one in which we were sitting, where the members of the family were assembled for night prayers. The greater number of these were my entertainer's slaves. Having prostrated ourselves on our knees, I was surprised to hear the prayers given out, not by the master of the house, but by one of his female slaves. The voice of the woman, who appeared to be about forty years old, was so pathetic and well balanced, so true in its enunciation of the words of the petitions, and so evidently a reflex of the emotions of a heart that had at the time no place in it for anything beyond the act in which she was engaged, that I caught myself wondering where she could have acquired gifts and graces which, under like circumstances, I have not unfrequently seen disregarded by better educated people of the white race. Without hurry, and with proper modulation and emphasis, she uttered the petitions set down in the formularies, and, with equal truth to their sentiment, she was answered by the rest. When we arose from our knees that night, I felt that I would like to ask that christian woman's blessing.

"Compare this with another meeting of family prayers at which I was present a year or two later. The head of the family in this case, a good and pious man, though an unreflecting one, occupied the position that had been taken by the negress in the other. The prayers were the same, but oh! how differently were they recited. Where the feelings of the heart, in the one case, found their faithful expression in the tone of the voice, and in the whole manner of the petitioner, there was nothing to be observed in the other beyond a monotonous outpouring of words, tame spiritless, except when the stream was interrupted by such expressions as the following, given parenthetically: 'We fly to thy patronage—("Nancy, that boy is asleep again!") Give us this day our daily bread, and—("Willie, Kneep up straight!") Suffered Under Pontius Pilate—("Jane, why don't you hush that child?")' How is it possible for anyone to pray aright who is compelled to listen to such a travesty of a solemn act as is exemplified in this case?"⁵¹

It may be that this kind of feeling has been lost and blacks may never recapture it again. These praying black Catholics, while a show piece for the master, steered their listeners as would a protestant like Richard Allen (organizer of the African Methodist Episcopal Church), preaching from the pulpit in the late 1700's and early 1800's.

⁵¹Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79.



The fact that Church officials were not aware of or concerned about the welfare of the slave, and Indians too, is not the point. It was a legitimate effort of the Catholics to try to reach the black slave. But, the legitimacy was squandered by the necessity for the black man's labor, the master's fear of Church authority and Protestant evangelizing efforts. This made preparation for baptism and baptism of slaves a matter, not of decision, but of direction—this in the interest of farm and plantation life and to meet Church laws of baptizing slaves. Slave baptism was to help establish the Catholic community and identify its human property as part of the community and separate them from others. This did not make the slave a Church member with

rights, but identified him as a Catholic.

Nor is it adequate to say that black slaves took advantage of an opportunity to become Christian, but instead, by physical force and coercion, blacks became Catholic and made the best of their worship situation.

Like most things for the slave, attendance at Church too was basically by command and for personal prestige—until churches became overloaded with enthusiastic slaves. This unwritten command, too, extended to the white woman. For example: Gillard points out that one writer in the early 1800's notes that "*Church attendance was made up of women, the officials of the governor's entourage and negroes.*"⁵²

While blacks, under Catholic controls, were picking up religious habits in the colonies, their faith and knowledge of Catholic practice grew, so that many were better versed and prepared than their masters.

In the midst of all of this, in 1854 we find a black priest being ordained. He was James Augustine Healy, who was ordained to the priesthood in Paris for the diocese of Boston, Massachusetts. Healy became the first black priest in the United States. He had brothers who also later became priests. (Healy and his brothers Alexander and Patrick, like many blacks, were the products of a mixed (Irish-slave) marriage; they did not involve themselves with the fight for equality.) This again attests to the black person's real concern and involvement in the Catholic church and to the fact that many blacks were, within their family life, very much "Catholic."

SISTERS' WORK WITH BLACK GIRLS

In the centennial booklet of the Sisters of The Good Shepherd we find the establishment of one of the early efforts to provide for the homeless black girls in the archdiocese. Though the establishment of the work here wasn't until late 1800's, the background for this effort began in Angers, France, where the Good Shepherd Sisters had a novitiate for missionary religions. However the background statement is subject to interpretation as to how the sisters viewed what is meant by helping and how far religious enthusiasm goes:

"So ardent had been the desire of Mother St. Euphrasia to have colored children within her fold, that on one occasion, when returning to Angers from Rome, she beheld the little shepherd boys with their flocks she exclaimed, 'o, little Shepherd, how happy you are, you have both white and black sheep! I have white, but none that are black.' And she recalled the

⁵²Gillard, *ibid.*, p. 68.

same memory in 1843 when the first group of her daughters were to leave for Africa, she rejoiced that at last she would have black sheep in her flock. In December, 1845, Abbe Olivieri had conducted a little band of Negro girls from Africa to the Good Shepherd in Angers. They had been purchased on the slave market for five hundred francs each."⁵³

The booklet goes on: "Thus, according to her means, may we not say Mother Mary of St. Euphrasia was a forerunner of those who in the nineteenth century would engage in the reclaiming and rehabilitation of the young girls from the colored race? She economized cent by cent, the price of the rescue of one more Negro child, and inculcated this industrious art in her Daughters."⁵⁴ The sisters saw their work with black girls as being necessary enough to establish a home in Louisville.

"By the dawn of the year 1900 a great need had arisen in the City of Louisville for the reclamation and protection of young colored girls. The Sisters purchased the old Caldwell Building at Eighth and Walnut Streets, in which Vice-President Breckinridge was born, and by the addition of a three-story extension connected it with the Convent at Eighth Street and Madison. This building, blessed by Bishop McCloskey on May 13, 1899, now afforded the necessary space for carrying out this new phase of the Sisters' work which had been most dear to the heart of their venerated and saintly Mother Foundress."⁵⁵

AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

The Civil War approached with all of its implications and hardships. It was during the Civil War years that some white religious and laymen took sides on behalf of the black slave by secretly educating or training them in some way. However, many of these "acts of charity" were for personal recognition in the after life (indulgences), though some church groups were becoming more aware of the injustices to the black man.

After the Civil War again the bishops were heard calling for a meeting to consider the plight of the black man. Gillard put this call in the following manner: "It was the Second Plenary Council of Baltimore, however, which in 1866 made a detailed study of and charted a far-seeing plan of action for the improvement of the situation of the Negroes in this country; in fact, the desire to do something to alleviate the plight of the recently emancipated Negroes was one of the principal motives in calling the Council. When summoning the prelates of the United States to

⁵³Sisters of the Good Shepherd, (Centennial Celebration, Sept. 8, 1943, Centennial Souvenir), p. 33.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 33.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 33.

this Council, Archbishop John Spalding wrote, 'I think it is our urgent duty to discuss the future status of the Negro. Four million of these unfortunate beings are thrown on our charity, and they silently but eloquently appeal to us for help. We have a golden opportunity to reap a harvest of souls, which, neglected, may not return.'⁵⁶

Gillard goes on to give more of the flavor of what happened at the Council meeting in regard to blacks. He says, "The seventh session of the council was given over to a discussion of the problems of the Negro. After amending enactments to fit them to the changed status of the Negro, the Council formulated an appeal directed to the bishops of Europe beseeching them to send to America young ecclesiastics to devote themselves to the care of the Negroes. Besides this call for aid from abroad, the Council committed itself to a plan for the establishment of a new religious order to be composed of priests and brothers who would devote themselves exclusively to the welfare of the Negroes. It was agreed that a religious community of nuns should also be founded for work among colored girls and women."⁵⁷

It was the action from this Council that ultimately affected the Catholic approach to meeting what they called the needs of black Americans. In its final acts and decrees the Council devoted a chapter to the Negro. The bishops saw that because of the diversity of conditions in various parts of the country no specific mode of approach could be legislated for all dioceses, so they wisely left it to the discretion of each bishop to determine whether in his diocese circumstances warranted the establishment of separate churches for the Negroes. If it were judged better to permit the Negroes to worship in the regular parish churches, the Council warned, ". . . let the Ordinaries see to it that this is done in such wise that later the church will not be subject to complaint or pretext of complaint . . . And if, through neglect, this is not done, anyone who, unmindful of his duty, shall fail to provide the means of salvation to all seeking them, be they black or not, will merit the strongest condemnation."

The members of the Council were especially desirous that "apostolic men should give missions in places where Negroes are numerous." They recognized that the greatest handicap was the scarcity of priests for labor among the Negroes . . . The Council gave special attention to the matter of education for the Negroes and urged religious communities of both sexes to open schools for them, as well as orphanages. Finally, the decree added that, ". . . in future Provincial Councils, especially in those

⁵⁶Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 113.

provinces where Negroes are more numerous, all these matters as well as a better and more efficacious method of saving the Negro, be diligently discussed."⁵⁸

The implications of the Second Plenary Council were plain. We see from this Council the development of the idea of separate churches. We also see the development of the idea of missions among blacks and we never see any mention of the problem that exists with white Catholics and their attitudes toward blacks.

WINNING THE SOULS OF BLACK FOLK

Gillard, quoting the Rt. Rev. Monsignor Peter Guilday, said ". . . the first organized effort in the United States to win the souls of the colored people after the Civil War was carried out by the priests of Mill Hill who came here from England in 1871. It was twenty-one years later (1892) before the American Church accepted the whole burden of the spiritual welfare of our colored citizens through the establishment of the Society of St. Joseph."⁵⁹ In December, 1891 the Josephites, as the society of St. Joseph was called, got their first black priest, Charles Randolph Uncles.⁶⁰ Gillard says that the Josephites, along with the African Mission Fathers, all predominantly white were the "backbone of the colored mission."⁶¹

And it happens—at the Tenth Provincial Council of Baltimore in 1869 "The matter of Negro welfare was discussed, as was decreed by the Second Plenary Council. This Council committed itself to the policy of providing special churches and schools for the Negroes.

"Shortly after the adjournment of this Tenth Provincial Council, Archbishop Spalding issued a pastoral letter to the clergy of the whole province urging the establishment of missions, churches, and schools for the Negroes wherever possible by taking up collections for this purpose, particularly in the wealthier dioceses. He also called upon the superiors of religious organizations to appoint specific priests to carry on this work."⁶² The establishment of separate congregations, one for blacks and one for whites, was now a reality.

It was this period after the Civil War that saw the use of Martin de Porres and Peter Claver as images to inspire blacks to come into the Catholic ranks. Blessed Martin was introduced to American blacks in 1866 by Father Felix Barotti. The erection of the St. Augustine Church in Washington, D.C. was the result

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 112-114.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁶⁰Albert S. Foley, S.J., *God's Men of Color* (Farrar, Straus & Co., New York, 1955), pp. 42-51.

⁶¹Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

of his efforts to evangelize the black American. The Martin Chapel was the forerunner of the St. Augustine Church there.⁶³ Many blacks were accepting Blessed Martin as an example of their aspirations and sufferings.

Martin de Porres, born of a Spanish father and a free black woman in Lima, Peru, December 9, 1579, was a Dominican Brother whose canonization did not occur until May 6, 1962, under Pope John XXIII.⁶⁴

From a quick look at baptismal records throughout the Louisville archdiocese in those heavily black populated areas, a decline is noted in the number of blacks being baptized, especially after 1870. Most of the early baptisms, however, were done just because the master wanted it done and the church was expecting it to be done. The black man's new freedom to choose may have prompted many choices not to just go along with church expectations.

In 1888 black Catholics saw Father Peter Claver, the missionary who worked among the slaves in South America, canonized by the Church as a special patron of blacks. His canonization gave emphasis to the rise and spread of St. Peter Claver societies. In the same year Pope Leo XIII, through an encyclical, encouraged the complete eradication of slave trade in Africa.

But, the "separate church" decree of the Second Plenary Council and the result of the Civil War, affected blacks nationwide and in the Bardstown-Louisville archdiocese. The roots of many black Catholics in the city of Louisville go back to the central Kentucky farms, as indicated in this letter found in the *Register of Baptisms, Volume II, March 18, 1871, through May, 1902.*

"Franciscan Fathers

501 East Green

Louisville, September 25, 1909

Rev. dear Father:

Please record on the baptismal record of Peter Brown (colored) who was born December 24, 1860 and baptized at St. Thomas, Nelson Co., Ky. in early infancy.

"He married Mary Doomes a widow, on Sept. 12, 1900 before me at St. Peter Claver Church, Louisville, Ky. Yours In Christ

Constantine Schorf, O.F.M.

Pastor, St. Peter Claver Church"

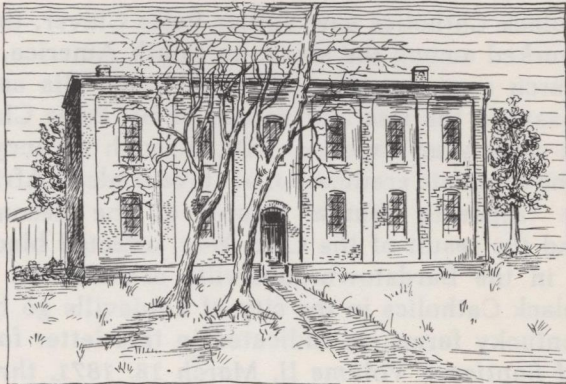
⁶³Guiliana Cavallini, *St. Martin de Porres Apostle of Charity* (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1963).

⁶⁴Martin de Porres' father did not claim him because Martin's skin was black. It is said that the baptismal registry carries this entry: "Martin, son of an unknown father." See Guiliana Cavallini, *St. Martin de Porres Apostle of Charity* (B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1963), p. 5.

In trying to find out more about black Catholics in and around the period of emancipation, the author talked with Mr. Bernard Smith of St. Mary, Kentucky. He is a member of St. Charles Parish and was born in 1886. He tells about the Smiths to whom his father was a slave.

One of his father's stories to him went as follows: "I was about seven years old when I first heard the story. That just before the end of the Civil War my father said he prayed that they [the slaves] would not be freed because he was afraid they would die or be killed. Their masters made them pray that the Union Army would lose the war. My father said, some of the slaves ran away." Mr. Smith's father was first owned by the Bevens and then by the Smiths to whom his name is attached.

There was but one black congregation at this time in the archdiocese (St. Augustine in Louisville), though many blacks wor-



St. Augustine Church, Fourteenth and Broadway, Louisville, Kentucky—1870 (from the Golden Jubilee book of 1920).

shipped in white churches either sitting in the rear, in the balcony or standing (or not coming at all). The separate schools for the most part had begun in several places. The school buildings were not of quality construction and apparently the quality of instruction was just as bad. Under the circumstances it is, and was impossible to have anything approaching an adequate education, though credit is often given to Catholics for trying in their own way to provide some sort of education for blacks of the Catholic faith. The education effort in Louisville goes back to the early 1800's.

"As early as the year 1808, Rev. Stephen Theodore Badin undertook the construction of a convent for women near his residence of St. Stephen's, wherein, it had been already arranged between him and his co-laborer, Father Nerinckx, certain pious souls among the young women of the settlement were to find a home and employ themselves in teaching the children

of the neighborhood, both white and black. He prosecuted the work successfully, but on the very day the house was ready for occupancy, it took fire and burned to the ground."⁶⁵

The first set of early schools and the one Church that did develop in the Louisville archdiocese were like most of those in the United States. These "starts" are listed in order of their beginning:

1. *School for Colored Children, 1867*

(St. Monica's School for Colored) at Bardstown, there was no separate church at the time. It was under the administration of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.

2. The St. Augustine parish having been started in 1868 and the church being built in 1870 St. Augustine's School for Colored started in 1871, in Louisville; administered by the Sisters of Charity, this was the only church-school combination for blacks at this time.

3. *St. Catherine School for Colored, 1869*—two blocks from the Church in New Haven. There was no separate church. Administered by Sisters of Loretto (it closed around 1935 under the Ursuline Sisters).

4. *St. Augustine's School for Colored, 1872*, in Lebanon, Kentucky. There was no separate church at the time. Sisters of Loretto staffed it.

5. *St. Dominic's School for Colored* (later Holy Rosary) 1877 Springfield, Kentucky, (known, too, as Briartown). There was no church; administered by the Sisters of Saint Dominic.⁶⁶

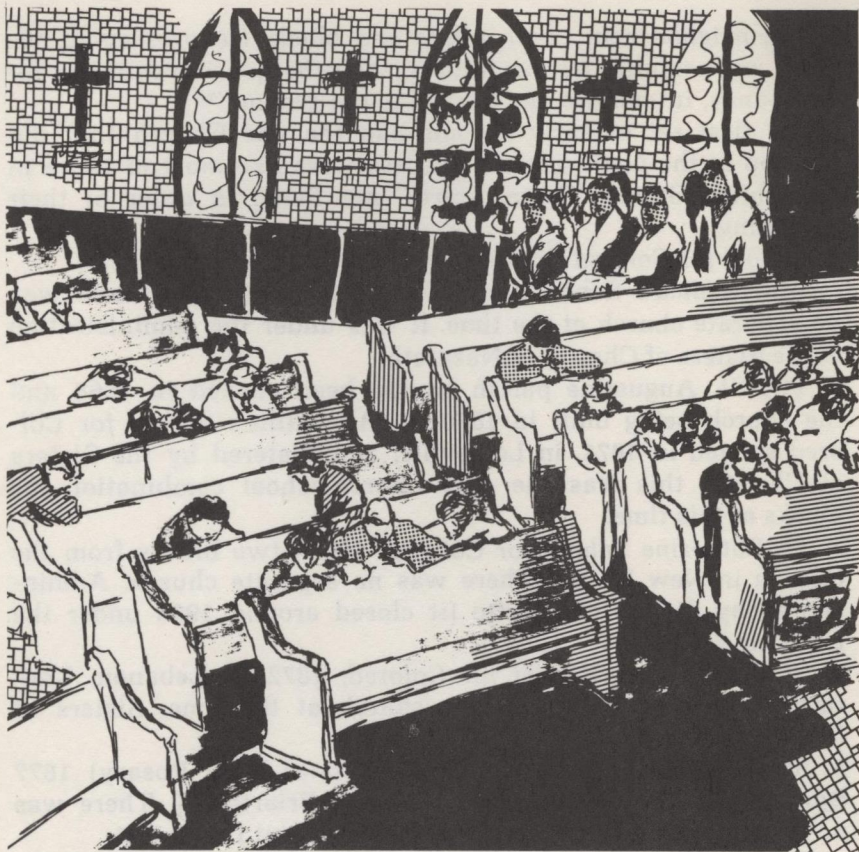
The schools had an expressed purpose of education for blacks and along with the one church was the base around which the black Catholic community built and practiced their faith.

The building of the St. Augustine Church and School may have been an attempt to hold on to those black Catholics who were coming to Louisville. Because of the growing strength of the black Protestant church in the Louisville community, a complete Parish design was needed.

In 1866 there were at least two schools for black children held in black Protestant churches. They were maintained basically

⁶⁵M. J. Spalding, *Sketches of the Early Catholic Missions of Kentucky* (Louisville, Webb and Brothers, 1844). p. 67.

⁶⁶According to some local people, the St. Dominic School around 1912 to 1918 had lay teachers and it was public. It closed about 1918 and the children went to the colored public schools, on High Street in Springfield and Valley Hill School in Washington County. Between 1925 and 1928 the old school building was used for fund raising activities in an effort to build a separate school and church. The black people bought the property from the school board and built the Holy Rosary Church with the school in the basement in 1929. The new church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt. In 1966 the Catholic schools were integrated and the children went to St. Rose.



This illustration by Mervin Aubespain shows a form of separate worship. Standing in the rear of the church, even if pews were empty, was a way of life for blacks.

by parent contribution and some white sympathizers.⁶⁷ (These churches were 5th Street Baptist and Quinn Chapel A.M.E.)

The General Association of Colored Baptist of Kentucky had begun an educational effort in 1879, with the opening of the Kentucky Normal and Theological Institute (now called Simmons University) here in Louisville. The school headed by the Rev. E. P. Marrs had a purpose of "establishing a high grade college for the special training of preachers and teachers."⁶⁸

While the Churches took the lead, it wasn't until 1882 that an act of the Kentucky General Assembly was passed that pro-

⁶⁷Golden Jubilee of the General Assoc. of Colored Baptist in Ky. C. H. Parrish, editor, Louisville, 1915.

Conference Handbook of the African Methods Episcopal Zion Church, Louisville, 1916—Life and History of the Reverend E. P. Marrs, by himself, Louisville, 1885.

⁶⁸Ibid.

vided for equal funds for black and white children's education.⁶⁹

Most of the inspiration and leadership in the general black community came from the Protestant church. Black Catholics took part in community affairs, but their church and religious leaders (priests and sisters) were not a general part of the early black community development in Louisville.

FUNDS FOR THE NEGRO AND INDIAN MISSION

Now, black Catholics were to hear from the Third Plenary Council of 1884 held in Baltimore. This Council, after looking at its work, made additional plans for black Catholics. Says Gillard: "This Council introduced a new idea in the Negro apostolate—that of catechists, that is, lay helpers who prepare the way for the priest by gathering their neighbors together, teaching the catechism and hymns, and thus cooperating in a more fruitful ministry. Perhaps the most practical decree of the Council was that making mandatory an annual collection in all the churches of the country and the appointment of a special commission to handle the money so collected for the benefit of the Negro and Indian missions. So, the Third Plenary Council took means to relieve the two chief distresses in the work for the Negroes: lack of priests and of money."⁷⁰

From this point on, separate churches, schools and other activities became a way of life for black Catholics—and still with no recognition of the white problems. The religious of that day apparently felt distinguished about their efforts and pursued them with great zeal. This effort however was very individualistic. There was little collective Church action or concern on behalf of black Catholics.



A St. Augustine first communion photograph in the early 1930's.

⁶⁹K.N.E.A. Diamond Jubilee, 1951, 75th Year of Progress, A Report.

⁷⁰Gillard, op. cit., p. 116.

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Chapter IV (1890-1955)

At this point in history we find that blacks were voluntarily sticking with the Catholic faith and in the midst of readjustment and growth in the church, we find other national events, good and bad, were taking place that influence one's view of the black man's situation in the church he helped build.

Father James Augustine Healy, the first black priest in the United States, was appointed Bishop of Portland, Maine, on June 2, 1875. Unknown to many he was an "American black man."⁷¹

Fr. Augustus Tolton died in 1902. He was the first known black priest in the United States. Fr. Tolton was ordained in 1888.

Fr. Charles Randolph Uncles, S.S.J., was ordained to the priesthood December 22, 1891. He was the first black priest ordained in the United States.

In 1889 blacks of the faith organized five national congresses to discuss and work on what they viewed as the problem. These congresses were called Catholic Afro-American Congresses. They ended in 1894. The Review reports: "The first Negro Catholic congress was held in Washington, January 1-4, 1889. Of the eighty-five accredited delegates almost three-fourths were from the District of Columbia, Maryland and Pennsylvania; the rest were from Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Kentucky, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, Louisiana and South America. The congress opened with a mass at St. Augustine's, the largest, most costly church for Negro Catholics (at that time), in the country, celebrated by Father Augustus Tolton . . ."⁷²

Another event during this era was the organizing of a group of priests (basically white) to work among blacks. "In 1893, by the joint action of Cardinal Gibbons and Vaughan, the United States Province of St. Joseph's Society was constituted an independent organization with headquarters in Baltimore."⁷³ The Society was better known as the Josephite Fathers.

Xavier University of New Orleans, for blacks, was authorized to grant degrees by the State of Louisiana in 1918. It was also around the turn of the century that Mother Katharine Drexel was giving her wealth and leadership to Indians and blacks in this country. The Federated Colored Catholics of the U.S. was

⁷¹Albert S. Foley, S.J., *Bishop Healy, Beloved Outcast* (New York, Farrar, Straus and Young, 1954).

⁷²Spalding, *op. cit.*, p. 340.

⁷³Gillard, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

organized in 1925.

There was also during this period the Supreme Court ruling of 1896. The Court in the *Plessy vs. Ferguson* Decision upholds the doctrine of "Separate but Equal." This paved the way for legal segregation in all walks of life.

The social teachings of Pope Leo XIII apparently had little effect on the attitudes of Catholics in the United States. With the court's ruling in hand, the church's old practice of segregation became law.⁷⁴

Most of the help coming to blacks came from the efforts of a few individuals and groups (both black and white).

WORSHIPPING A BELITTLING PROCESS

For those blacks outside of the "colored" congregations in the archdiocese, worshipping was a belittling process.

In trying to get some insight into what it was like, the author talked to some older black Catholics like John Ed Crow of Bardstown. Mr. Crow was born in 1887. He tells what it was like worshipping in the Catholic church around the turn of the century. "We [blacks] stayed to the left of the church [St. Joe's in Bardstown] and to the back. We took communion at the rail but we stayed at the left and could not come down the rail but so far." He said he thought baptisms were the same but that he could not say for sure. On confessions he said, "our confessions were all heard on the left side of the church too."

Blacks were buried at the St. Joe's Cemetery but in the rear of it, in a special section.

He pointed out that sometimes special masses were held at the colored school. (This was the old St. Monica's School.)

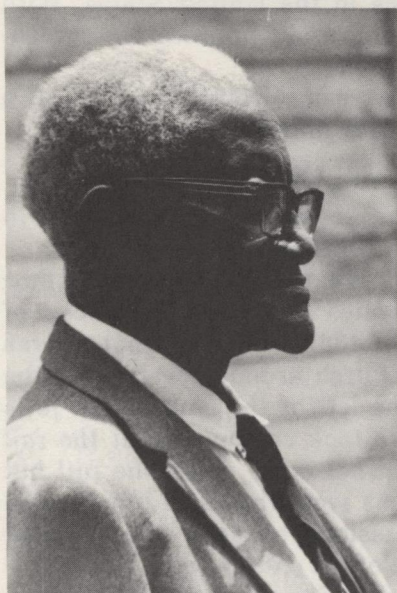
He related that "people in those days rented pews and a white lady was in a colored lady's pew. The colored lady tried to get her pew seat and the white lady kept her out. There was nothing much you could do . . ."

He also said "they [whites] did let a colored person sing in the choir one time and a white person asked the priest 'why do you let "niggers" sing in our chorus?' The priest said, 'it [the chorus] belongs to everyone.'"

Mr. Crow related that he never thought he would live to see the day that changes would happen. He felt that there still are no real spiritual feelings between blacks and whites even today. And he questioned how many white priests and religious people coming out of hate-filled backgrounds would ever be able to be really Christians toward black people. "I wonder about it," he concluded.

⁷⁴Etienne Gilson, *The Church Speaks to the Modern World* (Image Books, Doubleday and Company, Garden City, New York, 1961).

Another point of view on black worship and schooling in the Catholic church, comes from Mr. Bernard Smith who gives an idea of the floor plan at the St. Charles Church in St. Mary, Kentucky and how blacks took part in parish affairs. He said, "Blacks went in a side door which led to pews in the rear of the church and the white pews were separated from the black pews



Mr. Bernard Smith of St. Mary, Kentucky. At right top: the porch of his farm home, where he often sits thinking of the days when his father was a slave there. St. Charles Church, lower right, is near the Smith home.

by an aisle."

Mr. Smith said the people had continued sitting that way until 1967 when Father George Waldie spoke to the congregation one Sunday at the church and said the people could sit anywhere they wanted to. The aisle of the church which divided blacks from whites now has a pew in it. Mr. Smith indicated that black people like going to church better now.

The cemetery is also segregated, "blacks are put to the rear," said Mr. Smith. There is one black person, who by mistake is in the white section. It seems that the creek that divides the cemetery was not up at the time of his burial and that, by mistake, his body was interred on the wrong side of the creek, thereby putting him in the white section.

Father Waldie knows Mr. Smith and said he came to church every day and that most of what Mr. Smith said was true. People at Loretto indicated that Mr. Smith's memory is relied on by many people looking for information.

Mr. Smith related that Fr. Waldie also indiscriminantly buried

some children together. When questioned, Father Waldie said he did not remember this when he buried children; color made no difference to him.

Mr. Smith indicated that the first colored school at St. Charles was located in the house in which he is now living. Mr. Smith's father, Austin,⁷⁵ helped raise the money and built the school where the Jr. High School now is located (St. Charles Jr., a public school). The first teacher he remembered from the first school (which is now his house), was a Mrs. Grundy Mattingly, who was white. The other teacher was a Mr. Smith (no kin to Mr. Bernard Smith), who was black. He lived in one room of the schoolhouse. The black Catholics who built the second school had to give it to the county before they could get teachers for it. This was St. Charles School for Colored, (it was thought to be public). Mr. Smith said that this was told to him when he was very small. More information could not be obtained on just what the school situation was.⁷⁶

A PARISH SEGREGATION POLICY

An example of how blacks took part in their church affairs while being segregated, is found in connection with the same St. Charles' Church of St. Mary's, Kentucky referred to above. Apparently blacks actively shared in the financial obligations as well as other social and civic activities, though on a segregated basis. In a book titled, the *History of the St. Charles Church*, there are several indications of this.⁷⁷

In the St. Charles One Hundredth Anniversary Book of 1907, some rules and regulations of the church were listed. One such rule, No. 6, page 105 read:

"To approach the Sacraments on your proper Sunday: First Sunday, for the married couples; second, for the Young Man's Sodality; third, for the Young Ladies Sodality, and the fourth, for the colored people." Also listed under "colored" are three persons as promoters of the Apostleship of Prayer "League of the Sacred Heart" Page 106 in the history.

St. Charles also had a St. Peter Society of "colored people." The Anniversary Book said, "The Society is represented at present by about thirty of the congregation, and it is a source

⁷⁵Mr. Bernard Smith is the son of Mr. Austin Smith who was a slave and a leader in the community. Mr. Bernard Smith now owns the land on which his father was a slave. The remains of the home of the first Loretto Sisters is located on Mr. Smith's farm, in St. Mary, Kentucky. Both chimneys of the old house are still standing.

⁷⁶See page 53 of this Chapter, Item No. 3.

⁷⁷Rev. J. J. Pike, *History of St. Charles Church Centenary of the Congregation 1806-1906* (St. Mary, Kentucky, 1907).

of much good among the colored people."

It was also recorded of the St. Peter Society: "In the first place, to become a member, one must be a practical Catholic and the Society go to Holy Communion in a body every three months. One of the principal objects of the association is to provide for its members a resource in sickness, when those who are not always able or willing to assist them. To accomplish this end and to secure those aids, which in the most trying hour of existence is a most praiseworthy object, will indeed, contribute very greatly to their temporal and eternal welfare. The members must visit the sick in their turn, and set up with them, and look after their comfort and welfare. And besides this each member is allowed twenty-five dollars for burial.

"For further particulars the reader is referred to Austin Smith, the originator and promoter of the Society."

Further from the St. Charles One Hundredth Anniversary Book: "As a rule the colored people of St. Charles are pious, orderly and well bred, and most sincere and earnest Catholics. They are also very respectful and differential, and manifest a very considerable spirit of liberality, which they made evident by contributing a very material share in building the new church of St. Charles. The St. Peter Society have the honor also of having donated one of the stained glass windows to the church, and in various other enterprises they have been equally generous."

Listed as making the First Communion in 1906, the Centennial year, was one colored person. In 1907 there were listed seven "colored." (See page 110 of the History). Listed were five "colored" persons for confirmation, with two sponsors.

At the end of a list of contributors to the New Bell for St. Charles in April 1907 were the names of twenty-four "colored" persons; including Bernard Smith, who had contributed to the cause.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES FOR BLACKS

The development of facilities in which blacks could worship took root during the time covered in this chapter (roughly 1890-1955). The Commission for Catholic Missions Among the Colored People and Indians reported large gains in the physical facilities for Negroes; "From January 1, 1928 to January 1, 1941, there has been almost a hundred percent increase in the number of mission units available for the special use of colored Catholics in the United States. A total of 332 mission units are now being operated for Negroes, which is an increase of almost 91 per cent over the total of 175 reported thirteen years ago. The Commission reported that "of the 296,998 colored Catholics

in the United States, 189,423, or 63.7 percent, claim membership in their own churches. The other 107,575 belong to white or mixed churches. This does not mean that colored Catholics claiming membership in their own churches do not attend other churches. . . ."⁷⁸

The continual growth of such schools and some churches are seen in the Archdiocese of Louisville during this time. There was, for the schools, legal separation as the result of the 1904 Kentucky Day Law. Here are the schools and parishes that were established especially for blacks:

1. *Good Shepherd School*, Louisville, 8th and Madison 1897 to 1964, run by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd—it had an orphanage, elementary school and vocational education that was mostly domestic.
2. *St. Peter Claver School*, Jackson and Lampton Streets, 1908 Louisville. The church was erected in February the year before. It had a vocational school effort going from 1918 to 1922 for girls and boys. It taught mostly domestic skills. The school was run by the Ursuline Sisters of Sacred Heart. It closed in 1967.
3. *The St. Monica's Parish and Church for Colored*, Lebanon, Ky. 1913 which was across the street from the white church St. Augustine—the school was in the basement of the church. They began integrating the school in 1957. The process was completed in 1960. The school was under the direction of the Sisters of Loretto.
4. *The Catholic Colored High School* at St. Augustine, 1921 Louisville. St. Augustine church was given over to the diocese by the Josephite Order in 1893. The school program was run by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth.
5. *Diocesan High School for Colored*, 1928, Louisville—the given name was St. Mary's. The St. Augustine School was now under the control of the archdiocese. The school program was run by the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. This school closed in 1958.
6. *Holy Rosary Parish for Negroes*, 1929, Springfield, Ky. (called Briartown) a mission of St. Rose. The school was in the basement and it integrated with St. Rose in 1966.
7. *Immaculate Heart of Mary*, Louisville 1953 and in September of 1954 the school opened, in 1955 the Dominican Sisters took over the school program. It is still operating.
8. *The St. Monica's Church Bardstown* opened in 1956. The school was moved to the new building site, though the old school on the North Side of the 200 block of West Stephen Foster Avenue served from 1942 through 1956 as a Chapel. In 1966 the St. Joe's and St. Monica's Schools integrated.⁷⁹ The St. Monica's School building is now 99% white occupied. The parish still receives money from the Negro and Indian Mission collection.
9. According to the *Record* of February 2, 1936, four other attempts were made to establish black parishes in the City of Louisville were made. Three of them failed, and the fourth, *St. Ann's on Algonquin Parkway* was given over to the organization of a white parish shortly after its erection.
10. *Holy Redeemer Church for the Colored Catholic* of the section in and around 8th and Madison Streets in Louisville. Rev. J. J. Neafsey said mass. I have no data, but the O'Leary Home adjoining the Good Shepherd Convent had been used as a church under the above name. The Home was purchased by the Sisters in 1907.⁸⁰

After talking with blacks in Raywick and St. Mary, Kentucky,

⁷⁸Gillard, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-138.

⁷⁹Faculty notes from St. Joe's and St. Monica's Schools 1965 through 1971, Nazareth SCA Center Education Office.

⁸⁰Sisters of the Good Shepherd, (Centennial Souvenir, Sept. 8, 1943, Louisville), p. 34.

the author found some confusion about what was considered to be a Catholic school. Whites were saying one thing; blacks were saying another. Since the Catholic school is the one thing many whites hold up as their sign of good intentions, a great effort was made to find out what was actually a colored Catholic school. What blacks were saying was true—some of the schools were not Catholic—but the matter was still not totally clear.

The best explanation found was by Brother Evans, C.F.X. in his thesis titled "Catholic Negro Education in Kentucky." It was prepared in 1951 for the Department of Education, the graduate school of Boston College. He gave the following account in a section on Public "Catholic" Schools:

"PUBLIC 'CATHOLIC' SCHOOLS

... we have a group of schools which have been considered by many authorities as being Catholic schools in the ordinary sense of the word but which nevertheless do not fulfill even the necessary basic conditions. In the majority of cases, these schools have been and still are public schools, but since they may have originally started as Catholic schools or since, at various times, Catholic sisters made up the teaching staff, the schools at times were regarded as Catholic and have been listed as such in Sadlier's Catholic Directory, Gillard's Catholic Church and the American Negro and other sources. However, this research has revealed that these schools are not Catholic schools. But, that the record may be complete, a short history of these so-called Catholic schools will be included in this thesis under the name of the town in which the school is or was located.

"1. Raywick, Kentucky

"In 1885, the Sisters of Loretto opened a "Public School for Colored" in Raywick where they were teaching at St. Francis Xavier School. In 1886, the sisters left St. Francis Xavier School and it is presumed that they left the public school also. In 1893, St. Francis Xavier School is listed in the Catholic Directory as having four lay teachers with a student body of one hundred and fifty white children and forty-one colored. Perhaps the colored children were instructed in the same building if not in the same room. The Catholic Directory for 1894 lists a St. Martha's Parochial School in Raywick for the colored. Since no information can be uncovered concerning this school, it is presumed that it was the name given to the colored section of St. Frances Xavier School.

"In 1904, the year of legal segregation in Kentucky, Raywick had a colored school with twenty-two boys and sixteen girls. In 1911, the Ursuline Sisters took over the teaching in the public school for the colored and continued there until the spring of

1919. The 1938 historical issue of the Catholic diocesan paper, the Record, lists Raywick as having two schools, one for the white children and one for the colored children with an enrollment of twenty-four. From recent communication with the present pastor of the Catholic parish in Raywick, it is learned that while the school building belongs to the parish, it is a public school at the present time.

"This information would seem to indicate that although Raywick has been listed by many authorities as having a Catholic school for the colored, the school was and is in reality a public school.

"2. NEW HOPE, KENTUCKY

"The Catholic Directory for 1892 and 1893 listed the town of New Hope, Kentucky, as having a colored school called St. William with one lay teacher and twenty-nine pupils. However, it has been impossible to secure any information about this school. The 1901 directory lists New Hope as having a Colored Catholic district school with eighty pupils. In the 1938 historic issue of the Record the diocesan newspaper, the same school is also mentioned.

"However, the present pastor of the Catholic Church in New Hope declares that, on inquiry, he has learned that there never was a Catholic colored school at New Hope. The annals of the Sisters of Charity who teach at the parochial school in New Hope mentions that the sisters formed sodalities and had Sunday school classes for the colored of New Hope but makes no mention of a school for the colored.

"Perhaps this is another instance wherein, for one reason or another, the local public school for the colored was regarded as a Catholic school.

"3. SAINT MARY'S, KENTUCKY

"Located at St. Mary's is St. Charles parish and parochial school. Mentioned in the various sources studied is a St. Mary's School for the Colored and also a St. Charles School for the Colored. Facts seem to indicate that the places mentioned under the names above are one and the same place. With this thought in mind, the history of St. Charles School for the Colored is now summarized.

"The Catholic Directory lists a St. Charles School for colored children as far back as 1881. In 1887, the Franciscan Sisters took charge of the parochial school. Connected with the school was a department for colored children. In 1892, a lay teacher took charge of the colored school. In 1912, the Ursuline Sisters of Maple Mount began teaching in the colored school and continued to do so until 1919. Since that time, a negro Catholic woman is the school teacher. She teaches religion, as nearly all the pupils are Catholic.

"All the evidence gathered indicates that this colored school always was and still is a public school. Two of the Franciscan Sisters who lived in Kentucky when the sisters taught here say that "public" money was drawn for the colored school. This fact seems to indicate that as far back as 1887, this colored school was a public school and there is no evidence that it has ceased to be a public school even up to the present time."⁸¹

Brother Evan raises the question of "Non-segregated education" prior to 1904. From the information the author of *The Silent Believers* found, and from the information gathered from local blacks, this idea does not fit the picture.

Continuing from Brother Evan's thesis:

"HOLY CROSS, MARION COUNTY, KENTUCKY

"The Catholic Directory for the years 1888 to 1894 lists a number of pupils in a colored school at Holy Cross. All research has failed to reveal any information.

"SAINT CLAUDE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL FOR COLORED PEOPLE, LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

"The Catholic Directories for the years 1892 to 1896 mention the existence of a St. Claude Parochial School under the direction of a Sister Domitilla Furlong. All research done with the aid of two eminent Catholic historians of Louisville and Kentucky fails to reveal the existence of this school or any facts concerning it.

"Attempting to trace the school through the teacher, Sister Domitilla Furlong, led to the knowledge that this sister was a member of the Sisters of Loretto. However, a study of Sister Domitilla's autobiography, which is in the archives of the Motherhouse at Loretto reveals that she was not in Louisville during the years 1892 to 1896.

"The only conclusion that can be arrived at from present information is that an error was made by Sadlier in the Catholic Directory entries noted above.

"NON-SEGREGATED EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DURING THIS PERIOD

"Some evidence has been found during this research to indicate that both negroes and whites might have been educated in the same schools during this period before legal segregation.

"The pastors of Catholic parishes and schools are bound by the Catholic Church's principle of non-segregation to make all of the church's facilities, especially those in religion and education, available to all members of their flocks without discrimination. In cases, where the Catholic Negro population was

⁸¹Brother Evan, C.F.X., *Catholic Negro Education in Kentucky* (Boston College Graduate School, Department of Education, August, 1951), a thesis, pp. 38-42.

large and other factors warranted it, this obligation was met by the establishment of separate Catholic schools for Negroes. These schools have been described above. In parishes where the Catholic negro population was small or where other factors, such as economic conditions, did not warrant the establishment of a separate Catholic school for the negro, the pastor could fulfill his obligations by admitting the negro to the regular parish school. No doubt many of the Catholic pastors in Kentucky especially those in the smaller towns did just that and, according to principle, not finding this to be unusual, failed to mention in official and semi-official reports that many pupils in their schools were colored. It was only when racial segregation in schools became law in Kentucky that such specific mention began to appear.

"However, while studying the Catholic parish and school systems of Kentucky as listed in the Catholic Directories during this period, we find at least two instances wherein are listed Catholic schools for the Kentucky town but, nevertheless, the student body is specifically mentioned as being both white and colored. One of these is St. Francis Xavier School, Raywick. In 1893, this school is listed as having one hundred and fifty white and forty-one colored students taught by four lay teachers. The other is St. Michael in Fairfield, which listed its total student body as seventy-one, six of whom are colored. The archives of the Franciscan Sisters mention that in 1887, the sisters opened the parochial school of St. Charles church near St. Mary's, Kentucky, and that connected with the school was a department for colored children."⁸²

There is still some confusion, but this explanation from Brother Evans about the schools does help. Apparently many black Catholics attended public schools in the archdiocese and because of the heavy concentration of Catholics in these places, the schools were considered to be Catholic but actually were not. These schools did have Catholic personnel. The segregation, say some blacks, was within the building. Blacks were put in separate rooms or had special classes. One person suggested that these classes were religion classes. Religion classes, she said, were always taught separately.

WHY SEPARATE PARISHES WERE ACCEPTED

Some separate parishes were the result of black Catholics not wanting to be subjected to "inhumane treatment" while trying to worship. Other congregations were an outgrowth of white fear of the growing Negro Catholic population. One of the older black residents of Springfield said in his reflection of

⁸²Ibid., pp. 43-46.

acceptance of the black congregation: "We could not take the way they treated us anymore." The same information came from other blacks throughout the archdiocese.

Conversations with the younger black adults in reference to older black people reveals much conflict of opinion. The younger adults say "the older people are not together and there is no leadership in the black congregation." This is the reason they give for going to the white church. This view seems to support white pastors and gives some security to the younger adults as they search for direction from the Church.

On the other hand, the older persons are saying "we remember how it used to be—sitting in the rear, being pushed around and spat on actually." The older people are sincere in their concerns about white treatment and their worship, but can't seem to move toward their goal of establishing an effective black congregation. However, neither is black religious personnel being produced nor considered for such need. A white priest said, "we let it stay that way because they like it, it will die out." Another white priest said, "we've got problems and we don't know how to solve them. There are no black priests or sisters working outside Jefferson County, Kentucky, and no directed programs to help the people, black or white, to 'overcome' internally and externally, racial barriers within the structure of the church."

These concerns are widespread among black Catholics. And because of the lack of trained white leadership for the job in predominantly black communities; and because of the absence of black religious (practically altogether), there is now no way of achieving an adequate working understanding of the problem so as to resolve it. The success of the church effort in this area hinges on knowledge and understanding. For what the black congregation and schools mean now to the people are totally different from that of the past. Today's black student grew out of different circumstances and have different goals. If these goals and circumstances cannot be seen and understood, amid the struggle to practice what we preach; then the white mind will ultimately destroy the black genius of survival without benefit to themselves or others.

This then will lay the ground work for the entrance of religious cults into the black Catholic community.

While some gains were made as a result of Roman Catholic efforts to educate blacks, still no one asked the black Catholic and no one sought to correct the white problem. The experience was totally subjective. By the very nature of the early Catholic church, the black man was bound to have a poor and confused experience.

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Chapter V

BLACK RELIGIOUS PERSONNEL

The Archdiocese has produced some blacks for the religious life but none to work in parishes in the Archdiocese.

There should have been some recognition of the value and need for black religious while trying to successfully incorporate black laymen into the faith. Some pastors did use black religious men to this end in years past. For example: St. Peter Claver Church had its day when a black priest accepted an invitation to speak there around 1910.

"For more than a year, the Sunday congregation never exceeded forty persons. Though Father Constantine tried to visit all the Catholics in the district there was still very little improvement. However, in the face of opposition, criticism and religious indifference, God came to the rescue in the form of a Negro priest, Father Plantivigne, of the Josephite community.

"Father Plantivigne came to Louisville on a visit. When Father Constantine heard that he was in the city, he immediately got in touch with him and invited him to say mass and preach at St. Peter Claver on the following Sunday. And for this occasion plenty of publicity was spread all through the colored section of Louisville. When the word got around that a colored priest was going to be at St. Peter Claver the Negro people were beside themselves with expectations. When Sunday came there wasn't even standing room in the church, both for the morning mass and special services in the evening. From then on attendance at mass and other devotions was more than Father Constantine ever expected."⁸³

St. Peter Claver today has a very small attendance at church affairs and a very small congregation.

Another example can be found in Lebanon, Ky. where black people seem to feel that Father Vincent Smith, a Lebanon born black priest ordained in 1934, did more to influence thinking about the church than anything—though he came to them only as a visitor; "I remember going home to celebrate my first solemn Mass," Father Vincent said later. "It seemed that the whole population turned out. I think they did. The church had been restricted to colored for my Mass, but the white parishioners crowded in too."⁸⁴

In 1970 there was similar use made of a black priest. Father

⁸³50th Anniversary, St. Peter Claver Church, Louisville, Ky., 1957.

⁸⁴Foley, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-148.

Boniface R. Hardin, O.S.B. of Indianapolis, made a series of appearances at predominantly black parishes. Father Hardin is a Louisvillian and was graduated from St. Peter Claver. He, too, has made an impact in the black community for the Church. He, too, was a visitor.

There were several young ladies who left the Louisville Archdiocese to become nuns. Most convents prior to the 1950's did not take black women into their ranks. Therefore, most of the Louisville ladies went to the three black Religious Orders, which are:

1. Oblate Sisters of Providence, founded in 1829, with the Motherhouse at Baltimore, Maryland.
2. Sisters of the Holy Family, with the Motherhouse at New Orleans, Louisiana, founded in 1842.
3. The Handmaids of the Most Pure Heart of Mary, founded in 1916, Motherhouse in New York City.

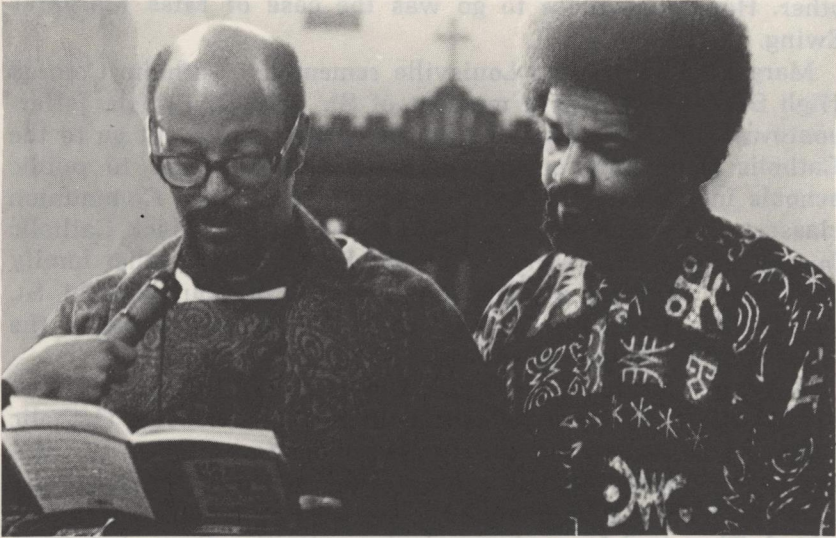
Considering the fact that the first effort at establishing a black sisterhood was made in the Archdiocese of Louisville, it is ironic that we can only estimate that less than 15 girls have become nuns.

In 1967, Sister Patricia Haley, S.C.N. was the first black religious Sister to come to the Archdiocese and work. Born in Columbus, Georgia, August 22, 1945, she was raised in Birmingham, Alabama. She graduated from the Holy Family High School in Birmingham in 1963 and entered the Novitiate of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, Nazareth, Kentucky in September, 1963. Her first profession of Religious vows was taken in 1964. She graduated from Catherine Spalding College, Nazareth Campus, in 1968 with a B.S. in Elementary Education and a minor in sociology. She has taught school in Louisville, Kentucky and Columbus, Ohio. She has a combination of duties now and serves on numerous boards, committees, and commissions. She is completing her Masters Degree work in Urban Studies at the University of Louisville.

We know of no men from Louisville entering the brotherhood. There were and are, apparently, no separate community of brothers for blacks, although it is estimated that most of the black brothers in the United States belong to the Divine Word Society.

Edward B. Branch, C.F.X., was the first black brother who came to Louisville. He came in 1969 to teach at Flaget High School. He was born in Washington, D.C. and graduated from the Msgr. Mackin High School in 1963. He entered the congregation of Xaverian Brothers in 1963. His first vows were taken in 1965. He graduated from the Catholic University of America in Washington with an A.B. degree in French in June of 1969.

While Father Vincent Smith of Lebanon, Kentucky and Father Boniface Hardin of Louisville were from the Archdiocese, the Louisville Archdiocese did not break the color line for priests



The Reverend Joseph Bell, left, pastor of Holy Cross Parish, is the first American black priest to work full time in the Louisville Archdiocese. With him is the Reverend Boniface R. Hardin, O.S.B., a native of Louisville, on a visit to Holy Cross Church.

until 1971 when Father Joseph C. Bell, III was appointed administrator at Holy Cross Church in Louisville. In May, 1971 he became pastor.

Segregated religious communities were widespread in the past and many black religious men and women say it is still that way, but in a more sophisticated manner.⁸⁵ They point out, however, that they probably have more white active individual supporters aligned with them now than they have ever had in their fight for justice.

MEMORIES OF BLACK CATHOLICS

Blacks speak of all kind of unfair treatment that they have received at the hands of the Catholic system in the Archdiocese. One recent example of these memories is the closing of the diocesan "colored" high school in 1958. The year before (1957) there was a large financial drive for schools, to which blacks apparently contributed. Catholic Colored High School closed

⁸⁵Black Soul: Life and Resurrection National Black Sisters' Conference (March-April, 1970).

the next year for many reasons, and one of these reasons was money. The white Catholic academies and schools were supposed to be opened to blacks, but many black Catholics ended up going to public schools—or not at all for one reason or another. Having no place to go was the case of Miss Margaret Ewing.

Margaret L. Ewing of Louisville remembers Catholic Colored High School. She was a member of St. Edward Parish, Jefferson-town, Kentucky. She tells us that blacks could not go to the Catholic elementary school, so her family sent her to public schools in the early 1950's. They did attend First Communion classes with whites because there were only two black Catholic families in the community, so far as she knew. The other family took their children to elementary school in Louisville at St. Augustine. The father worked in Louisville and brought the children to St. Augustine everyday.

Margaret was sent to Catholic Colored High School in Louisville each day, by bus. She said the reason for choosing Catholic Colored was money; it did not cost for her to go there. In 1958, the year Catholic Colored closed, she had just completed her junior year. She says many children were dissatisfied with the school. They had few extracurricular activities there, but were lost when told at the end of the year that there would be no school next year. She said, "*It seemed like they were just putting us out without notice.*" Margaret says money was the reason they could not go to the "white" Catholic high schools. They were not encouraged to attend the white school and they did not really know if they could. The family sent her to a county public high school that had just began to take in black students. She said, "*I could not adjust.*" She soon dropped out.

Because there had been a fund raising drive for the schools, the students felt the school would benefit from it. However the money went to the white schools and Catholic Colored closed. According to other students from the school, the picture given was the same.

Margaret went to work for five years, and then went back and finished a G.E.D. high school program, and entered college. She had to drop college in the interest of her family but she says she will be going back. She feels the school situation was her big disappointment in the church. There seem to have been many questions on the "whys" of Catholic Colored High.

Mrs. Octavia Watkins, 95 years old, tells that her father's parents were slaves to the Lancaster Family. Her grandmother in Washington County was given her freedom, and in turn bought her grandfather's freedom. She said they were all Catholics. Mrs. Watkin's present family left Ben Lancaster's farm in 1891 and came to Louisville. The family were members of

the Holy Cross Parish, Holy Cross, Kentucky. Her baptismal certificate shows her maiden name to be Boone, having been baptised August 27, 1876.

Mrs. Watkins supplied a news article from an Anderson, Indiana paper about her grandmother. It reported, "A stained and cracked piece of yellowed goatskin duly inscribed with a pen by a Kentucky court Clerk in 1848 bestowed the grace of legal freedom on a young slave woman fully 17 years before the Congress of the United States ratified an amendment abolishing slavery and then freed slave, Caroline". . . . She was the grandmother of Mrs. Watkins who is a member of St. Augustine Church in Louisville.

The report goes on, ". . . grandmother Caroline was freed. She and her husband, Stephen Boone, who had been a slave on a neighboring plantation, stayed with their former owners for many years after Caroline was freed. The handwritten goat skin document, headed 'Washington County Seat, Commonwealth of Kentucky,' stated: 'I, William B. Booker, Clerk of the County Court for the county aforesaid, do certify that Caroline, late slave of Nancy Lancaster, and who is of the following description—to wit: black complexion, cross eyes, about twenty-three or four years of age,—a free person of color duly emancipated and set free by said Nancy Lancaster—by her Last Will and Testament, which hath been proved and duly admitted to Record in said court, and under and by virtue of which this certificate was ordered to issue by said Court.'" In testimony where of I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of said Court at Springfield the 26th day of December A.D., 1848."

The document was signed by W. B. Booker, Clerk. Grandmother Caroline died in 1913 at Loretto. Mr. Boone died in 1946.

Mrs. Watkins said at Holy Cross they sat on benches in the church that had no backs and they knelt down on the bare floor in the aisle. She was only four years old, but that was one thing she can remember. In looking back, she says she wonders why she ever stayed a Catholic. She said she remembers the sign in the back of the St. William Church at 13th and Oak. The sign read, "two back seats for the colored."

Recently, the Louisville Times, February 27, 1971, carried an article on the St. William Church titled, "Church is on Move in the Inner City." Blacks say, however, that this church represents one of the best forms of church renewal for whites in the Archdiocese. They say, too, that there is no such effort yet that meets the need of renewal in the church for black congregations. St. William Church is mostly white in a heavily black populated area.

Albert A. Hardin gives this information about his memories. He is originally from Bardstown and Nelson County. His Church

membership was at the St. Joseph's Proto Cathedral there. He remembers these facts according to tradition about the building of the Proto Cathedral. He says the labor that built the Cathedral was mostly that of Negro slaves. The Negro slaves were donated to the church by slave owners to help build the Cathedral. Many skilled craftsmen in that area were Negroes and these craftsmen were responsible for making the big columns in front of the church, the break work and other types of work of this kind. His grandfather was a craftsman—a blacksmith.

Mr. Hardin himself was involved in the protest group that was trying to prevent the establishment of a separate church in the old St. Monica's School for Colored. He says the St. Joe's Church was about one quarter black and the number was growing. The pastor of St. Joe's brought in a white priest, without telling the people, to become pastor to the Negroes, around 1941 he thinks. *"That's how we got the Saint Monica's Church for Colored at the school."* However, he felt the majority of blacks did not want a Negro church.

He also told about the big slave holdings at Nazareth College. The college had a huge farm to care for. Some of the slaves there belonged to the sisters and they worked for them at the college.

Mr. Hardin's big concern is that white priests have done very little to evangelize the black man. The black man comes about his catholicism by inheritance of slave ancestors and is not really educated in the faith. He points out that the white priests come into a ready-made situation of people who have no place to go. He says the task now is to bring blacks into the church and to tell the truth about the past.

Mr. Hardin was a school teacher and one of his sons, the Rev. Boniface Hardin, was the first black priest from Louisville and the second from the Archdiocese, having been ordained in 1959.

Some people still remember the "God Comes to Little Africa" concept of work at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish. The church, in an article from the Louisville Times, December 5, 1964, was then seen as being for Negroes—says the article—*"Father Mondine's church is the third in Louisville for Negroes and his school is the fourth for Negroes, he said."*

The "Little Africa" tag had been given to the west Louisville community by public officials and the news media apparently, and the tag was used in the mission effort. The use of that tag in circles outside of the community became apparent after looking at several articles, and in particular the *Frontier Call*, Mission Magazine of the Verona Fathers, November-December, 1955, titled *"God Goes to Little Africa."* The article is the essence of general mission appeals in behalf of black people by the Order. That some parishioners and friends were still aware

of that type of appeal surprised the author.

One family in the rural area told about what it was like to have seventeen children, fifteen of whom were born at home because the Catholic hospital did not accept blacks at that time. However, their last two children were born at the hospital. The family said they have been Catholic all their lives and all their children are Catholic.

This kind of information was spoken of by other black Catholics. Most black Catholics saw their relation to Catholic service and help groups as being non-existent. Many blacks said that even though they were Catholic, they did not expect to be served at hospitals and agencies of their Church. In the metropolitan area the black Catholics express strong negative feelings about Catholic services of any kind.

To say, as some would say, that slavery and segregation in our Catholic institutions did not have an effect on black people of the faith is to look at catholicism in the United States from the white perspective only. To do so is to assume that man's past, both black and white, has nothing to do with his present and future situation. The paradox in the American Catholic Church shows up in the attitudes of whites too. Father Anthony Heitzman gives a point of view in some reflections on racial prejudice in the church by a white person.

"In the late forties, when I was a teenager and a seminarian, I naively asked the pastor of St. Edward's Church, (Jefferson-town, Kentucky) why the last few pews in the Church were roped off from the rest. I was told, 'That is where the colored sit. Don't sit there.'

"One Sunday morning when the Church was crowded, I started to sit in one of those back pews. An usher advised me to stand in the back of the Church rather than sit there.

"This situation confused me as a teen-ager and a seminarian. I thought that the Church was teaching us to 'Love Our Neighbors' and to treat all of our neighbors as equals.

"Later on, I noticed this same situation in other Catholic Churches. Each time I saw it, I questioned the sincerity of the Church, its teachings and its members, including the priests."

THE SILENT BELIEVERS

Summary

That the Catholic Church and Christianity (with the Afro-American in the middle) has been involved in a paradox is obvious. The black man, in his consistency, never gave in to Catholic oppression while he was under persecution by a church that was under persecution itself. Black people of the archdiocese, especially in the rural areas, have not been a part of the church leadership, but a long history of struggling as a group and as individuals has taken place in order to persuade the church to be totally Christian towards its few black faithfuls. Louisville is an example of the way Catholicism has aided and abetted slavery and the oppression of blacks in these United States.

The question of the Catholic Church being "in touch" with the general black population in the U.S. is misunderstood by white Catholics, and sometimes this point is used to dodge responsibility. The black Catholic's question is, "Why couldn't the church work with those few blacks in its faith—as brothers?" This question is still unanswered.

The early church's effort in working with blacks was individualistic, inconsistent and subjective. Even after the creation of U.S. Church hierarchy, the mechanism to deal with slavery and racism in the Church did not work for the black man, but against him. The "act" of baptizing black slaves presumably influenced Non-Catholics and was supposed to take care of the ultimate purpose of all Catholic action; that is, salvation of souls. Blacks accepted baptism by whites as a way to become a respected person.

Adherence to the demands of slavery and segregation helped shape a Catholic oppression system that produced fear, hate, and misunderstanding. While Catholic church dogma has no color line the color line did develop. For whatever the reasons may be—the program for eliminating Catholic mistreatment of Catholics in the future, has to actualize itself in the hearts of its faithful, now that the legal problems are being eliminated.

Blacks locally and nationally seem to hold out hope for the future of the black man in the Catholic Church. However, blacks recognize the fact of "white power" in the Church and the improbability (not impossibility) of total black power except as it exists in the individual mind of blacks as points of pride and motivation for a better life. Black churchmen struggle at all levels with the question of their pride as persons and the Church's ability to assist in the struggle for dignity.

The gravitation recently of blacks toward the Catholic Church is not founded in tradition or knowledge of the faith but in

pride. Pride in their ability to overcome their economic, legal, and social oppression. The increased number of black converts represents a flight from the black churches, (which have fought for blacks through the roughest segment of their oppression) and is basically due to their improved social position. This increase in black converts is not due to the Catholic evangelistic effort. However, many Catholics point to this as success. Unless the Church understands the social situation of black Catholics, then some continuing protest can be expected.

In general, it can be said that the history of black Catholics can be found in the footnotes of the annals of a great church. This oppression, not only of the man, but of the facts, has produced the paradox from which the black churchman struggles to free himself. Overcoming the missionary psychology is a mammoth task and the church will need more than the right philosophy or theology. It will have to make its philosophy and theology work for the black churchman as well as for the white churchman. Black Catholics in the Louisville Archdiocese, and in the U.S. generally, will no longer shoulder the total responsibility of white "Catholic" racism.

The church will have to equip itself to prepare and educate its white constituents to practice the brotherhood pronouncement of the faith in light of an honest understanding of the past. White religious have spoken for blacks all through the experience, and now white religious must do some soul searching themselves while offering help—not control. The black man can give to the church the positive benefits of his oppression, providing the church can respond to this donation.

In light of the past and the tremendous task ahead, I would offer these suggestions:

1. Encouragement and support should be given to black Catholics in their efforts to create an effective vehicle (like the National Office for Black Catholics) to identify, develop and manage the burden of being black in a white church—this in preparation for being a part of a community of faithful on equal terms.
2. The Church should seek much more help from the black Catholic in preparing the white Catholic to function in the Church and the secular community as an activist and believer in the Fatherhood of God for all races of men.
3. The Church should help its white Catholics individually and as a group, make themselves available to efforts directed toward helping to bridge the gap; understanding that the efforts will be long, hard, and sometimes disappointing.
4. Special training has to be made available to our white Church leaders, both Lay and Religious, to help them work more effectively in culturally different situations. Our leaders are the pace setters and unless they rid themselves of this apathy and

equip themselves with knowledge and love, the going will be much longer and harder.

5. Our leadership needs to lead more and not administer only. By practicing our Catholic faith and putting our own house in order we can not only affect the lives of others, but we can also, through our example, go out and proclaim our work together as "Catholic" brothers.

Black Catholics have openly disagreed, but black disagreement cannot be understood as disloyalty. Neither can black loyalty be understood as agreement, if the Church is to openly bring about an adequate solution to this dilemma. The effort then is not just to save black Catholics but to save the faith.



The installation of Father Joseph Bell as pastor of the Holy Cross Church in Louisville, Kentucky—May, 1971.

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